

THE COMMONWEAL

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CONVICTS AND EX-CONVICTS

THE day after the last riot at Auburn, every reader of the newspapers knew that the blame was not all on the shoulders of the prisoners; that some of it was on the state, and that some of it was on himself. He realized that prison walls cannot be built high enough and stout enough to prevent men who have been deprived of hope from attempting to escape. He was told that large prisons are bound to be troublesome because a system created to accommodate the average cannot successfully extend itself over a thousand men. He knew that modern prison science demands the maintenance of many small prisons, permitting the segregation of prisoners according to a precise classification. But nowadays we sometimes wonder whether the story of last year's prison riots will have its just sequel in a readjustment of prison conditions soon enough to prevent another mutiny. The deficiencies of our prison system had long been known to the authorities; by dramatizing them the riots brought them to the attention of the man in the street. And so, in a way, the rebels ought to be regarded as public benefactors. The trouble is that action has been slow to follow the discussion which they evoked. Public interest, which was not awakened

by the warnings of penologists several years ago, and which can be kept alert only by excitements, is going back to sleep.

We wish we knew of some scheme, less wasteful and dangerous than a riot, but equally disturbing to the general complacency, whereby we might concentrate attention on the report of Governor Roosevelt's special committee on paroles. That report, which is humane without being in the least wishy-washy, reflects an attitude toward the prison problem which seems to us perfectly sound. The committee recommends first of all the appointment of a full-time parole board so that the parole system will not be in the hands of men who have other connections, and to them more important ones. With this board should be connected an employment bureau, the value of which should be understood by anyone who realizes how difficult it is for the ex-convict to find a job which will permit him to "go straight." And there should be a department for post-parole supervision, adequately staffed so that its work will not be done superficially. The committee believes that prisoners who never will be able to fill acceptable rôles in the outer world, because of degraded or perverted natures, should remain in the

care of the state even beyond the period of their maximum sentence, and that the parole board should have authority to find ways in which this might be done. But it also believes that the prisoner who is worthy of parole should be advised and actually assisted to find his way in the world, for while the case-hardened criminal is a burden to society, the ex-prisoner who is doing a good day's work, as a mechanic, let us say, is as important and valuable to the rest of us as any other mechanic. This program looks to us neither like romancing, nor like a product of the temper which regards a prisoner as a brute who should be stuck away to rot, conveniently out of the sight and smell of society.

And it ought to arouse a general interest, although it has been specially devised for New York state where the Baumes Law has sometimes acted against persons of criminal habit who are much more in need of psychiatry than of punishment. And so long as the application of the law is automatic on a fourth offense, judges will be passing life sentences, often against their will, on persons who are obviously not to be classed with thugs or murderers. A full-time parole board would be able to seek out these cases, and to lend assistance. At present it is no one's duty to distinguish between these and other cases. It is no one's duty to determine whether any fourth offender deserves another chance at freedom. It is no one's duty to help deserving prisoners who, lacking friends and money, are powerless to start themselves on the way to liberty. Our machinery for getting men into prison may be full of holes. But so is our machinery for letting them out.

Give them a chance to hope. And above all get rid of what Mr. George W. Alger calls "the baseless assumption that all convicts are alike, all are desperate, all are dangerous, and all must be incarcerated under the same conditions."

WEEK BY WEEK

BY issuing their famous Memorandum early in January, the French dominated the naval conference at London before it began. Since then the extremely embarrassing problem of French-Italian parity (embarrassing to everyone but France) has kept them in the strategic position. That position has been further strengthened by their seeming insistence upon a political pact of security, with teeth in it, or a 700,000-ton navy which would certainly force Great Britain and subsequently this country to add substantially to the tonnages which they have been previously willing to accept. Now whom has France to fear? She could accept a drastic cut in her present navy without putting Italy within striking distance; Germany's Ersatz Preussen is the best thing in its class, but the German program calls for only four like it within fifteen years, and even that program seems

too heavy for Germany's tax-payers. Anyway, with the strongest army and the greatest air fleet in the world to protect her, it is ridiculous to suppose that France actually fears Italian or German aggression, whatever her delegates say about it. Whatever game they are playing, they have come near wrecking the conference, which would be a sadder result for France than for any other of the nations at London. We have no guess as to their motives, and the explanations which we have read have not convinced us.

PERHAPS it was a little uncourteous of the press to have expressed so much astonishment at the willingness of the French to put the submarine on its best behavior in time of war. True they are conceding a good deal more than they were expected to, as the foremost exponents of the submarine idea. And by subscribing to Articles I and II of the ten-year-old Root resolution they agree that a merchant vessel cannot be seized before it has been subjected to visit and search, and that it cannot be sunk before its passengers and crew have been removed to safety, which is obviously impossible when the attacking craft is a submarine. There you have a promise which destroys the effectiveness of the submarine as an offensive weapon. But it might be gracious to remember that the French have insisted that they want a submarine fleet for defense only. Since most of the world is persuaded that the submarine is not eminently suited to that purpose, it was a little hard for many of us to believe their story. But they stuck to it, and so they are not now being inconsistent if they help to curtail, on paper at least, the submarine's offensive operations. Our surprise is evoked because we were not prepared for them to be consistent in this respect. It might have been well to have disguised so revealing an emotion.

AT LAST the plight of those who suffer persecution for justice's sake in Russia is stirring what remains of civilization to protest vigorously. Pope Pius XI in a public letter scoring the "horrible, sacrilegious iniquities which have been committed and which, indeed, grow worse every day," calls attention to long years of suppression regarding which so many "liberal observers" have had little or nothing to say. The papal letter summarizes a good deal of evidence, of which there is verily no dearth. It was followed in England by an address in which the archbishop of Canterbury, on behalf of the Anglican Church, supported the declaration of the Holy Father and assured his hearers that "unless there is evidence of a real improvement I may feel bound to deal with the matter in Parliament—not as a matter of politics, but as a matter which concerns the honor of a Christian people and the demands of our common civilization." Subsequently there have been other public protests by representative rabbis and spokesmen for the ministry. The Soviet reply puts forth the assertion that religion

Russia and
Religion

is the great opponent of Communism and must therefore be fought. In so far as this argument is not a flimsy assumption, it is incredible to civilized men.

THIS plea was followed by the report that the congress of the Moscow League of the Godless, which is meeting to elaborate the "five-year anti-Christian plan," has adopted the slogan, "For a Godless Russia, for a Godless Collectivized Village," and has declared for an anti-Easter campaign starting on March 15. The account was curiously juxtaposed to a cabled summary of the attitude of the Soviet press in response to the papal letter. This, no doubt assumed to justify the government's stand to the people, is based on vehement denials that "religion is being 'persecuted' in Russia." An appeal to the authorities of the Orthodox Church (all the strings of this puppet show, however, were plainly visible) brought the answer from the Metropolitan Sergius that "religion in the U.S.S.R. has never been subjected to persecution before or now," and that, although some of the churches have been closed, it "was not done on the initiative of the authorities but at the request of the people, in some cases on the decision of the churchgoers themselves." It would seem that the Metropolitan protests too much. And also that the Soviet censors of press despatches have realized their mistake in allowing too much of the true state of the religious warfare to be forwarded to foreign journals. The Pope has directed an ax against religious suppression; the chips must fall as they may. Meanwhile the whole Christian world will pray for the cessation of monstrous misrule in Russia. Significant in this connection is the statement of Bishop William T. Manning, of the Episcopal Church. Approving the declarations of the Pope and of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop invited clergymen and people "of all faiths" to a special service of prayer and intercession at the cathedral of Saint John the Divine. Many groups of Protestants have responded to the plea, so that the occasion is evidently one which finds all American Christians unified in a spirit of petition and protest.

WE HAVE not much faith in spring elections as prophetic of the fall; a fortunate summer and a heavy harvest have changed the temper of the nation more than once. And ordinarily we should not find any great national significance in the election of a Democrat to Congress from the second district of Massachusetts, even though that district includes Mr. Coolidge among its voters, and has been regularly Republican for almost half a century. But this has not been an ordinary year. The luck which has been as a guardian angel to our post-war Presidents has notoriously deserted Mr. Hoover; he was elected at a time of greatest prosperity in the anticipation that he would help to promote it, and shortly after his inauguration prosperity began to wobble on

its pins. Not since the administration of Mr. Taft has there been such a general political unrest. The evolution during the tariff debates of what amounts in everything but name to a third party, the discontent with prohibition enforcement (shared by dries and wets) and the opposition to the confirmation of Mr. Hughes as Chief Justice all testify to this. The election of a Democrat in a Republican stronghold can usually be traced to local grievances which are of little import elsewhere. But in a year when the Republican party is divided it assumes a dramatic importance.

UNUSUALLY ambitious and forward-looking is the plan of organization developed by Bishop Thomas J. Walsh, of Newark, for charity work in his diocese. Realizing how difficult it must always be to maintain the enthusiasm of volunteer groups, most members of which are accustomed to think of alms as an annual or monthly contribution, the Bishop has established five Guilds of Mount Carmel. This number will eventually grow larger as other parishes are enlisted. Each Guild has for its purpose the fostering of active participation in some form of welfare work—boys' clubs, catechetical instruction, travelers' aid, parent-teacher associations, among others. The membership fees are nominal, so that the emphasis upon actual rolling up of the sleeves will not be wasted. A close relationship between clergy and laity is guaranteed through the appointment of moderators. As one estimates the possibilities which confront those who labor for social betterment in a spirit of Christian kindness one sees that Newark is well on its way to caring for those more or less victimized by industrialist surroundings. Here is a fine response to the plea for Catholic action.

A CURIOUS social problem is brought to light by the Travelers' Aid Society's announcement that "magazine crews," as organized by various agencies interested in selling subscriptions, have employed young people with amazing disregard for their welfare.

A Dangerous Job If the picture drawn is realistic, boys and girls in their early teens have been lured away from home with the bait of supposedly high wages, have been used for their appeal as house-to-house salesmen, and have then been left stranded without enough money to bring them back like more or less safely restored prodigal sons. The Society reports more than a hundred cases in thirty different cities. Some of these victims have supplied absorbing information regarding the methods used—the yarn about working for an education, the tale of the poor little girl who needs the money (told to middle-aged business men) and similar frauds. As described, this is really a graduate course in dishonesty. One hopes that the situation may prove to be less alarming than the symptoms appear to indicate.

MR. WILL HAYS'S bureau for bigger and better movies has become so agitated in its quarrel with the

A Critic of the Movies Churchman that it now threatens legal action. To which warning the Churchman replies that it will continue to criticize the Hays policy, "under the right of a newspaper . . . to publish

with impunity truth, with good motives, for justifiable ends, though reflecting on government, magistracy or individuals." We are glad to see the reply because it ought to force a showdown. There is no reason why the failure of the Hays bureau to improve the movies in the way in which it was called upon to improve them should go unrebuked. The Churchman's favorite contention is that the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors have used the churches and the women's clubs to lend a tone of respectability to their organization, at the same time continuing to produce films of questionable character and "degrading influence." Its charges have been direct, unequivocal, and supported with documents; the replies of the Hays organization have been vigorous enough, and indignant enough, but have usually been reducible to something like "It's not true." If the debate is brought into the courts, we have not much doubt as to which side would finally emerge victorious.

ACCUSTOMED as we are to devices which enable the recluse of Colorado to follow an address by King

Wonders of Scholarship George or to take in a New York concert while he smokes his woodland pipe, no instruments of investigation seem very marvelous to us. But one cannot help thinking that the equipment which

a scholar now brings to his work is, in a way, more astonishing than any other manifestation of inventive genius. A delver into the past is no longer a near-sighted person who has collected a few ancient folios. He sets to work with a method and an apparatus so nicely adjusted to the problem in hand that watching his results is almost incredibly fascinating. Witness, for instance, Mr. James F. Kenney's study of the Sources for the Early History of Ireland, one volume of which the Columbia University Press has just published. Thirty years ago precious little was known about the beginnings of Irish history, other than that the people had used a curious jargon and that Saint Patrick had banished snakes from the island. Today so much material has been unearthed and critically examined that it is the work of a lifetime to encompass it even cursorily. Mr. Kenney's book is a critical bibliography, incorporating the findings of a host of scholars and summarizing what has been learned from ancient and monastic writers about the early fortunes of the Celts. The work has been so competently done that an editorial writer, hard-pressed to learn the truth about some contemporary incident, feels that he is only a blundering amateur, without insight into the secret springs of knowledge.

HERE is a bird's-eye view of what antique civilization—Phoenician, Greek and Roman—knew about the mysterious islands where tin was mined. Then follow the shadowy but absorbing records which hint at how Christianity came to Ireland, probably in the fourth century as a result of the monastic foundations of Saint Martin of Tours. Next it is Saint Patrick who engrosses our attention, writing letters which prove the excellence of his missionary endeavor but telling us very little about himself or the land. Suddenly, out of a mist of legend, there emerges the great figure of Columbanus, so significant for the history of Europe as a whole and so representative of Irish Christianity. From then on through the twelfth century one confronts a constantly increasing mass of testimony, all of which needs to be sifted and weighed before its usefulness will be notable. Mr. Kenney is the sifter and weigher. Content that others should tell the story itself, he has assembled the evidence. His product is a tribute to the possibilities which confront our age. Indeed, it is already achievement of a kind no previous time could have produced, and so a proof that we are not so emasculated and unworthy as sundry contemporary Jeremiaeses would have you believe.

NO OBSERVANCE of Lincoln's birthday would be complete without further books devoted to his character and achievement. This year there

Lincoln in Retrospect were at least two new publications, one of which (Dr. Barton's Lincoln at Gettysburg) may be termed genuinely interesting and valuable. Much interest

was aroused by the news that Mr. Thomas F. Madigan, the New York autograph collector, had acquired one of the copies of the Gettysburg address. So far as is known, there are five exemplars of this document, which is steadily becoming the most famous manuscript in American literature. Fortunate, indeed, will be the man who can acquire and preserve so illustrious a bit of paper. But since all of us can know the address itself, the thought that generation after generation may learn the American creed and the American will to live from so pure a source is blest with peace and hope. Indeed, it is the longing for peace that now strikes us as so evident a part of Lincoln's basic emotion. Not, of course, a peace at any price. But a peace to be prayed and struggled for, to be utilized in the hope of avoiding further conflict. It is strange that so small a group of words, uttered by a man trained by experience alone, should possess such inexhaustible vitality.

DESIGNATED chief-of-staff of the French army, General Weygand fought a preliminary battle with sundry spokesmen for the left, who

Is General Weygand Dangerous? averred that he was so clerical as to render an assault upon the government inevitable. The ministry rallied to his support, however, and the incident closed with abundant applause for the new chief whom

Marshal Foch had termed an indispensable aide. Indeed there would be little interest in the affair if it did not prove that rabid anticlericalism in France has ebbed considerably. Twenty years ago a soldier's Catholicism actually did bar him from the highest military offices. So many people believed that royalists and the Church might combine to order an offensive against the republic; and then, of course, there was politics. At present nothing survives of this pristine terror excepting the echo. The world advances, after all. Two factors which have undoubtedly contributed to the progress are listed in General Weygand's reply to his critics. Averring that he was a believer in the republic, the new chief added with noticeable irony that no one could accuse him of "being disturbed over the religion of others" to the extent of lecturing his subalterns. It is well that the French government can now claim this point of view for its very own.

THE Meteorological Observatory in Central Park tells us that the west wind is the dirtiest of the eight winds that blow upon our city. What a Debunking the West Wind corrective to the unscientific tradition of mere song and story! The poet who affirmed that, of a' the airts the wind may blow, he dearly loved the west—would he have expressed this marked preference had he known that, although blowing (hypothetically) only one-eighth of the total time, the west wind deposits one-fifth of the total dirt? The other poet, who repeatedly besought the wind of the western sea to "breathe and blow"—would he not have faltered had he realized that these activities would leave .3 of an ounce of soot per month on every square inch breathed and blown upon? The visionary who actually aspired to be merged with that skyey voyager—"Be thou me, impetuous one!"—would he not have dissolved the partnership upon learning that it was headed for a filter in Central Park? The lapidary of folk knowledge who gave enduring form to the statement that, when the wind is in the west, then 'tis at the very best—did he know about modern cleaning bills? As to the ancients, what would they make now of their Zephyrus, the balm-laden, the golden, the messenger of the gods and their son? Thus we progress, our knowledge gets more and more accurate, and all we lose out in is poetry.

ROSWITHA, the nun-poetess, whose tenth centenary was recently celebrated in Germany, was far removed from the twentieth-century stage and cinema palaces. Yet her motives Roswitha: "The Mighty Voice" in adopting the dramatic form might well be that of the Catholic playwright today. She explains them: "Lamenting the fact that many Christians, carried away by the beauty of the play, take delight in the comedies of Terence and thereby learn many impure things, she determines to copy closely his style, in order to adapt

the same methods to the extolling of triumphant purity . . . as he has used to depict the victory of vice. A blush often mounted to her cheeks when, in obedience to the laws of her chosen form of poetical expression, she was compelled to portray the detestable madness of unholy love." It is a happy circumstance, then, that Gandersheim where the aristocratic Helena von Rossow became the unassuming religious, should commemorate her anniversary and recall the lofty purpose of "the mighty voice" of the first German poetess.

FOR A NEW NOAH'S ARK

THE quest for dictators continues. Part of the zest of the chase comes, no doubt, from the exceedingly elusive habits of the worthwhile dictator. You have no sooner closed upon him than he begins to look like every other human being, and through this perfect mimicry disarms you. But the hunt goes merrily on, occasionally seeming a practical enterprise. We note with interest that Dr. John L. Tildsey, reporting public school education in New York City riddled with politics and in a bad way generally, declares that the one thing needful is to find a man as big as Mr. Owen D. Young or Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler to supervise the schools and, when necessary, make them over. The idea of the elected education board has long since been out of date. It served no other wise purpose than to give the tax-payer a chance to limit expenditures. Today this is no longer an object, and the school board is frequently an assemblage of canny fellows whom opinion churns round and round like rowboats on a gale-racked sea. If some competent individual were selected to control the educational business, he would doubtless benefit us all and would, moreover, be carrying on in the pristine American tradition according to which a "representative" was supposed to be something more than a pinhead on a pinwheel.

Quite apart from this or sundry other local phenomena, the problem of what might be termed intellectual dictatorship is now exceedingly actual. We moderns are not infrequently given to admire our achievements—widespread ability to read, libraries at everyone's disposal, chemical and medical workshops in which the care of the body is charted with steadily increasing definiteness. And though we admit the social and political shortcomings of our time, we are comforted by the thought that injustice is now less strident and cruel than it was in olden times. Is not the law on the side of the angels more resolutely than ever before in history? Granted that the mechanism of industry is defective when it throws crowds out of work through no fault of their own. Granted that our administration of finance is unsteady when the savings of thousands are wiped out through unsound advice or poor management. The fact remains (we are assured) that society is impelled, as never before, by a communal desire to do the right thing.

But this assurance appears to be without a very firm foundation. What, one must surely ask in perplexity, is the right thing? During several generations America was ruled intellectually by the English Bible and one or two commentaries on that. Even the Catholic population bowed to this authority and became a Scripture-quoting group. While the national understanding of the Testaments was incomplete and incorrect in not a few respects (a fondness for the Hebraic letter sometimes getting ahead of regard for the Christian spirit) the United States was unified by its communal veneration of Holy Writ to an extent which even evoked the surprise and acclaim of foreign observers. We were a people of one book, just as older and homogeneous civilizations—of China, India and mediaeval Europe—have been civilizations of one book. Daniel Webster's esteem of the Sermon on the Mount was accurately representative of his countrymen. Lincoln's trust in Providence was a nation's trust. Americans did not always do the right thing, they were sometimes unaware of what the right thing was, but there remained a central body of doctrine to which they adhered.

In 1930 we are certainly no longer a people of one book, one philosophy, one faith. Catholics of a hundred years ago often made vigorous defenses of their beliefs against Protestant attacks, but both sides knew there was no argument about a substantial nucleus of truths held in common. Today the Catholic apologist, unless he be a specialist in a given type of controversy, addresses his normal argument for the Church to an audience with which he has practically no intellectual connection apart from a rather vague allegiance to reason and rectitude. The Protestant, for his part, no longer knows what Protestantism is. He may subscribe to an intensely spiritual, Barthian version of the Reform as presented by Dr. Brunner, or to some fervently idealistic interpretation like Dr. Hartley Burr Alexander's, or to a frankly Erastian modernization in which timidity and boldness are neatly blended. In any case, however, he will surely feel that the world has lost a good deal of even its former certainty about any intellectual or spiritual declaration.

We see the result most clearly in the moral realm. Marriage is surely one of the primary moral creations of the Christian faith. It is, perhaps, not hazardous to say that the Church as a moral agent stands or falls by what it has done for relations between men and women through the matrimonial sacrament. If unblest sex union is ever desirable ethically; if marriage is only an agreement, to be dissolved at will; if two people can live together with moral profit without having children—then what the Christian Church has said regarding marriage is plainly wrong or bound up with passing historical circumstances. Practically no American of two generations ago would have missed seeing this point. Practically none would have failed to endorse the Christian view, even if a Protestant might have held that infidelity was sanctioned as a

basis for divorce by the Gospel. In our time things are so changed that the community may be said to favor abandonment of, at least, the implications of holy matrimony.

The lack of unity thus revealed in the moral order will be found, after a little investigation, to extend throughout the whole domain of the intellect and the will. We are divided according to a belief in principle or a belief in expediency; according to thirst for beauty or unawareness of the ugly; according to worship of things or regard for the mystic's vision. And one reason why all this is so is surely the multiplication of books. It would be easy to map out the startling growth of the supply, which now includes so many thousands of volumes annually that all thought of surveying literature has gone. This grotesque acceleration of the writing urge must be attributed to two factors: the increase of knowledge scientifically arrived at, and the prodding of the imagination by the circumstance that reading is one way in which millions can use up their leisure hours. The first is often pardonable, since the age is rich in discovery and all worthwhile findings deserve to be recorded. But the second? Seriously regarded, it is a mosaic compounded with disconcertingly monotonous cleverness out of materials gathered helter-skelter from life, philosophy and history. The product is no better than its creators—who are often enough crude, time-serving, unprincipled and illiterate.

What most distinctly characterizes both sections of the literary deluge, however, is that originality is both the motive and the recipe for success. The new is always news. And it follows that when every incentive is given to produce something undreamed of before, the whole emphasis is placed upon the non-traditional and the chimerical. Herr Ludwig need not even quote his references correctly, provided he can supply a "new" Lincoln. Conceive and bring forth a revolutionary morality and thousands will admire your virtuosity. And who knows but what millions of minds are being fashioned in this mold—twisted into implements for registering thrills instead of being made antennae for the reception of beauty? One longs, pardonably enough, for some dictator capable of putting down sternly the folly and venality of literary politics. Or for a new Noah's Ark, in which to saunter away from the deluge.

These longings might evoke real activity if we thought of it in practical terms. If reputable authorities in every form of intellectual endeavor took a little time weekly to excoriate and expose some half-baked exposition of "new learning" they would render society a service to which it is entitled. If a concert of critics set to belaboring indecent and vapid excursions into fiction and poetry with half the energy which music judges now expend upon contraltos and pianists, the world might drive some pretense under cover. Such boons are, doubtless, too much to ask for. We shall merely continue to be swamped.

Places and Persons

THAT REMINDS ME

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

I WONDER if it would not be a useful work if Mr. Frank Sullivan, or Mr. Donald Ogden Stewart, or Mr. R. H. ("Bob") Davis, should write: A Joke Book for Highbrows: particularly intended as a guide for the use of college professors, scientists, social service experts, and others of the high priests of the intellectuals, in the preparation and delivery of after-dinner speeches.

Possibly Professor Stephen Leacock would be the ideal author or editor of such a guide. Perhaps the subject might be taught as a special course at the universities. Certainly, something ought to be done about it. This was proven amply and even painfully at the testimonial banquet given the other evening at the Hotel Astor in honor of the editors and contributors who have just produced the first volume of the monumental Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. There were many speeches. There were also many funny stories. Except for the stories, the speeches were of a most unusual order of excellence. Again except for the stories, the speeches sparkled with wit, and were rich with genuine humor. But, oh, the stories! All the Irish stories, and of course they were numerous, had to do with what Pat said to Mike, or Mike to Pat. All the Scotch stories dealt with the only characteristic of the Scotchman which the tradition of public story-telling permits to be mentioned, his parsimony. But the chief drawback of all of the stories was the manner in which they were lugged in, head over heels, painfully, inappropriately.

Whether any expert in story-telling would find the composition of the suggested guide-book financially worth while is, of course, another question. But in these days of many foundations for the support of worthy causes, surely here is one that ought not to be neglected.

Another point that might be called to the attention of public speakers in telling funny stories, or stories supposed to be funny, is the little matter of whether they happen to be true or not. This point, of course, does not usually matter, but now and then it matters a great deal. For example: Mr. Allen Johnson, the editor of the Encyclopedia of American Biography, told an anecdote which ran somewhat as follows:

"Illustrating the difficulties which confront the editors of encyclopedias, I would like to mention what one of my good Catholic friends in Washington told

Finding it impossible in his own case to keep a note-book—a practice which he would make compulsory if he were a dictator over all journalists and writer—the editor has decided to use one or two pages in The Commonwealth to relate incidents and memories concerned with places and persons connected with his somewhat wandering and occasionally adventurous mode of life, which may be of interest to our readers, and which otherwise would not get recorded. If our readers should be Queen-Victorian and refuse to be amused, the space devoted to these notes will revert to more useful material.—The Editors.

me about an experience that befell the editors of the Catholic Encyclopedia, that excellent production. It would seem that there are fundamentalists as well as liberals among our Catholic friends as well as among other Christian groups. In preparing the material for the volume under the letter

'D,' the Catholic editors reached the debatable theme of the deluge. In their uncertainty as to how they should deal with that subject, they decided to save time; so they inserted after the word 'deluge' a note saying: 'See under flood.' This deferred the matter for two volumes. By the time they reached the subject flood, under the letter 'F,' they found themselves still unable to deal with the matter, so they inserted another note referring the reader to Noah, which, of course, pushed the matter on for a goodly number of volumes."

As the laughter and applause which greeted this anecdote seemed quite sufficient for the speaker's purpose, he did not pause to tell us how, in the end, the harassed editors of the Catholic Encyclopedia treated the subject. It was not a bad story; it was distinctly better than others, although not so good as some; but the point of it rather fades out for anybody who takes the trouble to refer to Volume IV of the Catholic Encyclopedia, which contains subjects ranging from "Clan" to "Dio"; where, beginning on page 702, they may find an article fully dealing with the deluge, to the extent of about eight columns.

Such episodes throw light upon the mysterious origin of many popular myths. People listen to statements made by other people who apparently possess authority, accept them, make no inquiry and then pass the myth on, usually with a distortion or an exaggeration in the process.

Like the speakers at the banquet in question, I "am reminded" of something by the articles which have just begun publication in the Nation, dealing with the censorship and Publicity Bureau of the Christian Science Church. I referred briefly to this matter in my recent series of articles on Catholic publicity. Readers who are interested in the fuller details are recommended to read the series contributed to our contemporary by Mr. Henry Raymond Mussey. What I am reminded about in particular is the fact that I chanced to be a participant in what was probably the beginning of the work of the Christian Science Publicity

Bureau. At that time, some twenty-five years ago, I was reporting for the Boston Post. One of my tasks was to write an article describing the formal opening of the Christian Science Mother Church in Boston. I had no personal interest in the matter; certainly, I had no prejudice for or against the doctrines of Christian Science, for at that time I was not interested in the doctrines of any church. I simply wrote a straight news account of the ceremonies incidental to the dedication of the imposing structure which is the Vatican, so to speak, of Christian Science. The next day a gentleman called at the editorial office of the Post, sending in a card which designated him as a member of the Committee on Publication of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. It bore the name of Mr. Alfred Farlow.

Mr. Farlow, in a very courteous manner, thanked the city editor for appreciating the importance of the event described in my article. He went on to say that the writer of the article, no doubt without conscious intention to offend, had made certain statements which were erroneous in fact. Would the Boston Post, therefore, as a matter of justice, accept a letter for publication next day correcting the errors? The answer was, of course, promptly in the affirmative. All editors—except a few scandalous blackmailers who disgrace a noble profession—are always ready to correct their errors or mistakes. Mr. Farlow's letter duly appeared. So far as the Boston Post was concerned, that marked the first appearance on the scene of journalism of the organized publicity committee of the Christian Science Church. At that time, as those of my readers who are able to recall the period will remember, the press in general paid a great deal of attention to Christian Science, usually in an unfavorable sense. How completely the situation has been changed by the skilful, adroit, and in general quite legitimate methods of the Christian Science publicity machine is well known to all those having any really expert knowledge of contemporary American journalism.

As Mr. Mussey says in his first article in the Nation, "The Christian Scientists have the best publicity machine in the country." When we remember that the registered membership of the Christian Science Church is between two hundred and three hundred thousand people, the success of their propaganda proves the depth of their devotion and their continuous and well-directed zeal. The Catholics of the United States, as I have often said before, with all their twenty million members, are so far behind the Christian Scientists, in this respect, that they are not even able to challenge comparison. Where the Christian Science publicity machine falls down, so that now it is arousing much general resentment, is in their ill-advised and un-American methods of political wire-pulling and deliberate attempts to boycott and suppress books which they regard as obnoxious.

I recall another instance of the successful methods by which Christian Scientists have succeeded in propa-

gating their doctrines, in San Francisco some years ago. A Christian Science lecturer came to that city and advertised a public address. Two Catholic priests, the celebrated Paulist preachers, Fathers Gillis and Conway, arrived in San Francisco simultaneously, and also advertised a course of lectures to non-Catholics. The Christian Science lecturer and one of the Paulists spoke on the same night. The papers next day carried considerable publicity about the Christian Science lecture; but there was nothing about the Catholic lecture. One evening newspaper printed the entire address of the Christian Scientist.

I called up the managing editor of that paper and asked him why he did not give some space to the Catholic lecture. I pointed out that both lectures had been addressed to the general public, and it seemed odd that the Christian Science lecture should be published in full, since there could only be a few thousand members of the Christian Science Church in San Francisco, whereas there were tens of thousands of Catholics. He answered that the Catholic lecturers had not sent in any publicity material. I then asked whether if I made myself responsible for sending him a copy of one of the Catholic lectures, which would have general public interest, he would publish it in full. He then—to employ the useful stencil—let the cat out of the bag.

"Are the Catholic lecturers prepared to make a business arrangement?" he asked. I immediately inquired whether the Christian Scientists had paid advertising rates for the publication of the lecture, pointing out that there was a state law to the effect that all paid advertising matter in a newspaper should be marked as such. A trifle confused by this remark, he hemmed and hawed and gave me no definite answer; but immediately went on to say that he would gladly publish the Catholic lecture. As a matter of fact, the Christian Scientists had not bought advertising space, but they had paid for many thousands of copies of the paper containing the address, and did not bother to get the papers and distribute them. This obviated the necessity for the newspaper marking the published address as an advertisement. The Catholic lecture was duly published. That was the end of the matter.

But since then, Christian Science publicity—lectures, news, letters—has flourished exceedingly. Catholic publicity, in the general press, has not. Yet here, as in so many other things, we must try to do what Thomas of Aquinas labored so hard to teach us—we must distinguish. That the secular press has of late years given more and more space to news and views concerning Catholicism is unquestionable and that has come about naturally: through the press observing—as it is its business to do—the enormously remarkable facts connected with the world-wide resurgence of the Catholic faith. But Catholics themselves have done little to supplement this mass of news with planned publicity dealing with less sensational but at times much more important aspects of their Church.

MONEY AT TWO HUNDRED PERCENT

By FRANK O'HARA

THE average prosperous citizen with satisfactory banking connections would probably be astonished to learn that throughout the length and breadth of the land there are less fortunate fellow-citizens who are compelled to borrow money and who are unable to borrow it except at the rate of a few hundred percent. The Court of Appeals of Alabama in 1921 held that a loan was usurious where the plaintiff signed a note for \$5.00 stating on its face a rate of interest of 8 percent per annum, but in fact was required orally to agree to pay \$1.80 per month for the use of the money and did pay such amount. In this case the borrower paid \$21.60 a year on an original loan of \$5.00 or interest at the rate of 432 percent. It is reported that thousands of similar loans varying from \$2.00 to \$50.00 are made every month in the large centres of population of Alabama at rates of 300 percent or higher. The Legal Reform Bureau to Eliminate the Loan-Shark Evil, Incorporated, is authority for the statement that in Iowa in 1921,

Some money lenders are now extorting as much as 24 percent per month from small borrowers in this state. At least \$2,000,000 is due loan sharks by small borrowers in Iowa. Putting the rate at a minimum, it averages about 10 percent per month or 120 percent per annum, which means \$2,400,000 is being paid to the loan concerns by small borrowers for the use of this sum.

A few years ago the editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, Raleigh, North Carolina, made an investigation of the cost of credit to farmers who were compelled to buy on time. This paper states:

We find from our scores of reports from all sections of the South that buying on "time prices" in an average state in the South is equivalent to paying interest at the rate of 70 percent per annum.

Because of the widespread existence of usurious practices in connection with small loans the Russell Sage Foundation as far back as 1907 undertook a serious and exhaustive study of the salary and chattel loan business which, in the language of a report of the Foundation,

... showed the business of lending small sums on security of pledge or mortgage of personal property or the assignment of wages to be an extensive one; and that under the conditions which governed it, a considerable proportion of borrowers were being exploited instead of relieved.

Thereupon the Foundation drafted a bill which required all lenders charging more than the banking rate to submit to license and frequent examination by the state banking department. The bill authorized licensed lenders to charge on loans of less than \$300 an interest rate of 2 percent monthly, to be computed on unpaid balances as instalment payments were made,

with a small additional fee to cover the cost of drawing and recording necessary instruments. Because of the difficulty of safeguarding the fee charge

an alternative provision of a flat rate of 3 percent per month without fees was substituted, and in spite of determined opposition several states were induced to enact the bill into law.

But after debating the interest rate with the American Association of Small-Loan Brokers, the representatives of the Russell Sage Foundation came to the conclusion that "a flat rate of 3½ percent per month without fees or other charges would be necessary to supply the capital to meet the demand for loans in small cities." Up to the present time this Uniform Small-Loan Law has been adopted with a few modifications in some twenty-four states.

According to the Foundation,

The law has reduced unnecessary borrowing and lightened the burden of the deserving borrower. It has reduced the losses of the lender, legitimized the business and those engaged in it. It has substituted respect for disrepute. It has saved the borrowing public from the payment of excess interest running into many millions of dollars.

In the June, 1929, number of the *American Economic Review* there is a scholarly study of Connecticut's experience with the Small-Loan Law by Professor Clyde Olin Fisher of Wesleyan University. Professor Fisher arrives at the conclusion that

The small-loan act has probably saved the community from the greater evil of the loan shark. . . . The conditions seem to warrant a conclusion that this law is better than the passive policy of making no provision for small-loan companies, but that the terms of the law might be modified, in the light of ten years' experience, to the benefit of the small borrower.

After all, 3½ percent a month is 42 percent a year, or rather 51 percent a year if the interest is reinvested monthly. And while 51 percent may be necessary to keep the lenders of small loans within the law it seems to be a pretty severe penalty on the borrower. In answer to the argument that this is the lowest rate permitted by the law of supply and demand it may fairly be objected that the law of supply and demand needs revision in this particular respect. It was to revise the iniquitous operation of the law of supply and demand as affecting small loans that the Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitsch loan associations were started in Germany three-quarters of a century ago and that similar people's banks were later spread over Europe. It was to furnish similar relief to the hard-pressed small borrowers in the province of Quebec that Alphonse Desjardins organized the first of the coöper-

ative credit unions in Levis thirty years ago. Throughout a considerable part of the western world these popular banks are furnishing credit to small borrowers—but they do not charge 51 percent.

Following the Quebec experience a few credit unions have been established with marked success by French-Canadian groups in New England. It was because of this success that Mr. E. A. Filene of Boston undertook the financing of a bureau to spread the credit union message in the United States. Under the influence of this bureau a number of credit unions were organized a few years ago in North Carolina but apparently they have been only moderately successful. More successful have been the postal credit unions the first of which was started in 1923 with assets of \$18.50 and which in 1928 numbered 190 with assets of nearly \$2,000,000 owned by 25,397 shareholders. In some thirty-six states legislation has been enacted making possible the organization of credit unions upon favorable terms.

During the past three or four years two Catholic organizations have been studying and experimenting with parish credit unions, namely, the Central Verein and the Catholic Rural Life Conference. At the meeting of the Catholic Rural Life Conference, held in Des Moines in October, some of the results of these experiments were presented and were later published in the December and January numbers of the Conference's monthly publication, *Catholic Rural Life*. One of the parish credit unions reported upon was that of Saint Andrew's parish on the outskirts of St. Louis, Missouri. Saint Andrew's Parish Credit Union was organized in August, 1927, with forty-seven members. In August, 1929, it had 202 members and deposits amounting to \$10,851. Its reported loans for the last year amounted to \$8,448. Among the advantages claimed for the enterprise by the spokesman of this credit union were that it fostered thrift among the parishioners, that it secured loans to members of the parish for provident and protective purposes at the relatively low rates of from 6 percent a year to 1 percent a month on unpaid balances, and that it tended to make more stable the membership of the parish since there is less need of moving than formerly.

A second parish credit union described at the Des Moines Conference was that of Saint Cecelia's parish at Ames, Iowa. From October, 1928, to October, 1929, the membership of this credit union increased from twenty-two to forty-four. Its deposits increased from \$1,300 to more than \$4,000. In the words of the pastor, Reverend J. M. Campbell,

The savings of our members average nearly \$100 for the year. In many cases our members have never saved anything before. . . . An interesting fact is that some of the members began with deposits as low as \$1.00 a month but in a short time increased their deposits to \$10.00 and \$20.00 a month. . . . But the full story of the material service that we have been able to render is not told in terms of loans and savings. The members here and there

have been bettered by the influence of the credit union. . . . The credit union is, however, more than an agency rendering material services. . . . The credit union serves to bring the members of a group into a more neighborly spirit and this cannot but assist the Church in her spiritual mission. . . . The priest is able also to do a great deal of missionary work in building up respect for credit, because credit is the basis for the service of the credit union. The credit union really enables the priest to do much more fully the work that he is fitted to do. . . . I give the credit union my own heartiest approval and hope that it may find its way into every Catholic parish in this country.

As a result of the discussion at the Des Moines Conference a Parish Credit Union National Committee has been formed for the purpose of carrying on an educational campaign to bring the credit union to the attention of the parishes in the thirty-six states where credit union laws are now in force. The Committee also hopes to enlist the aid of Catholics who have had experience in credit union work so that it may be able to supply proper assistance to any parish desiring to organize credit along these lines.

An important difference between the case for the loan shark and that for the credit union is that the difficulty of making small loans represents an overhead cost to the loan shark who is compelled to get this added cost back in a higher rate of interest; whereas the lending of small sums to fellow-parishioners is not an overhead cost to the credit union. It is an asset rather than a liability. It is fraught with spiritual values that form not the least of the surplus from which the members get their dividends, while it adds no interest to the rate that borrower-parishioners must pay on badly needed funds.

Balloon Spider

O traveler on the wind of morn
What calls you from the dewy plain?
By urgent gossamer upborn
Some far, elusive goal to gain
Why leave you cup and thorn?

From your own body reels the thread
That upward drifts, and pausing soon,
With twist and turn divinely led
Sends high a silver-webbed balloon.
So shall the quest be sped.

Above the early western lea
A thousand silken bubbles float,
Buoyed by a breath from off the sea
Now lift as one, builder and boat,
As one, from earth set free.

Into the infinite we throw
Our wefts of faith, balloons of love
And, grappling, ever forward go.
Oh, mystery all else above,
The homeward way to know!

CHARLOTTE KELLOGG.

MR. FORD'S LATEST

By LYLE W. COOPER

IN THE face of business depression, Henry Ford's announcement of wage increases for his employees was in keeping with his reputation for the unexpected. Of course, there have been those to belittle the new Ford policy. Some sceptics are anxious to have explained how "fictitious"

wages can benefit the numerous Ford workers who have been laid off—a pertinent question, but one which does not vitiate the fact that those who still retain their jobs are recipients of more income than otherwise or that their fellows who return will secure the benefit of a higher wage scale. Other critics wax scornful because they regard the wage increase as a mere bagatelle, insignificant in its relation to the total profits of the Ford enterprises. There is also something to this criticism, but even so, the Ford record shines brightly in contrast to that of many other leading prosperous concerns.

More justifiable criticism can be leveled against Ford on the score of failure to match his wage policy with one which assumes a degree of systematic responsibility for unemployment. Concerning unemployment, evidently Ford is neither worse—nor better—than the general run of business leaders; such difference as exists lies in the circumstance that we have learned to expect more from Ford than from others in the way of an enlightened labor policy. In this connection, however, it may be that Ford approximates the psychology of American individualistic optimism: according to Ford's view, and doubtless in the mind of dominant public opinion, unemployment represents the abnormal and therefore, in conformity with supply-and-demand economics, is to be ignored. Or, to the extent that attention is directed to the problem, the remedy consists of opening up new opportunities for labor—that is, cure unemployment with employment. In the Ford version, a primary way to accomplish this laudable purpose is to create greater demand for commodities. Hence, the device of the five-day week which results in higher living standards (synonymous in America with enhanced demand for goods and services) and the device of higher wages. These measures, Ford maintains, involve greater production—for supply always comes forth to meet demand—and, as a natural corollary, the needed expansion in employment takes place. This optimistic analysis, so characteristic of our national preference for going ahead, tends to overlook the unpleasant fact that the business cycle is still with us and that, after all, the whole range of

To a greater extent than is generally realized, Mr. Ford's theory of wages has been accepted as an American employment ideal. The following paper, by a prominent student of industrial economics, subjects that theory to an examination. Wage theories hinge upon what they can do to offset unemployment; and Mr. Cooper believes that Ford has failed "to match his wage policy with one which assumes a degree of systematic responsibility for unemployment." This last, as may be learned from observation of industrial practice, depends on coordination between producers and organized labor.—The Editors.

industry cannot experience the same rate of growth as the automobile industry. The point of view which prefers to overlook considerations that do not fit in with its methodology of insuring progress, naturally assumes that unemployment insurance is unnecessary. But why the type of individualism

implicit should take such an extreme stand as to be indifferent to the desirability of a nation-wide system of employment exchanges, is much more difficult to comprehend.

We are mainly concerned, however, with wages. The reference to Ford's position on unemployment is designed to make clear that his wage theory as a cure-all is woefully inadequate. (Even the relatively high wages which Ford pays do not provide his workers in Detroit and elsewhere with sufficient income, when production slackens for a period, to obviate the need for huge charitable contributions the major part of which is not supplied by the Ford family.) But while granting the beneficial effect of the Ford wage policy, there are limitations in addition to its shortcomings as a panacea for unemployment. The most glaring limitation is that a not inconsiderable proportion of business concerns, at any given time, are in no position to carry the heavier operating costs which would be entailed in consequence of paying higher wages. These, in the language of the economist, are the "marginal firms"—those whose selling prices just cover their costs. The number of such establishments is increased by the "submarginal," comprising those which operate at a loss. It may be contended that if these two classes pay below a living wage, they have no right to exist. This is admitted, and, as a long-time policy, measures are justified to bring about the demise of those firms which fail to meet the human costs of their existence. But as an immediate remedy for present or threatened unemployment, higher wages for those at or below the "margin" simply would not work. It may be conceded that higher wages, though stimulating to greater efficiency, would be the economic salvation of some concerns. But for many the initial effect of higher wages would be lay-offs; that is, during a period of slack business, general wage increases would intensify the problem of unemployment. In fact, when attention is directed to the many firms which are not prosperous, President Hoover's policy of no wage reductions during a period of business recession has greater immediate significance than the Ford procedure. (This view is not meant to detract from the dramatic value

of Ford's action in calling attention to the importance of increased purchasing power for the masses.)

There is a further limitation to the Ford policy. Companies which could well afford to emulate it are not rushing to do so. How about General Motors? No announcement of a wage increase has appeared and it is here predicted that there will be none—at least, not during the period of business recession. Why the difference in policy between the two giant concerns in the automobile industry? A partial explanation is that Ford is Ford, unique in the business community. But further explanation is needed of why General Motors and other prosperous companies in the billion-dollar class do not see fit to stimulate purchasing power by means of higher wages.

The complete explanation would require delving into all of the complexities involved in the inertia underlying traditional methods of determining the market rate of wages on the basis of supply and demand of labor. While not seeking to minimize other influences, a major factor evidently derives from the financial set-up of some of our most dominant business concerns. Companies like General Motors, United States Steel, American Telephone and Telegraph, and power companies typified by Electric Bond and Share, are holding companies which are not directly engaged in the business of supplying goods and services to consumers—or of hiring labor. These mundane pursuits are carried on by subsidiary operating companies, thus permitting the holding companies to soar in the more ethereal but more exhilarating—and lucrative—realms of high finance. But while problems of operating efficiency are mainly delegated to subordinate concerns, upon them rests the heavy responsibility of functioning in such manner that the largest possible stream of money flows constantly toward the holding company's treasury. Those immediately in charge of wage policy in each subsidiary are not likely to do much in the way of heroic pioneering: for, no matter how liberal their salaries may be, they hold their positions primarily on the basis of ability to deliver the goods in the form of attractive statements of net income. However much some of them might be intrigued by the wage theories of a Ford, the successful working out of such theories depends largely upon indirect consequences, farther removed than the immediate present. And the typical successful manager cannot permit himself the luxury of looking, in a practical way, beyond the immediate present. Otherwise, he may find that he also has joined the ranks of the unemployed.

This state of things is different only in degree from that which commonly exists when the corporate form of doing business reaches its logical result: a large mass of undifferentiated stockholders whose primary interest in the business is one which springs from the desire for maximum quarterly dividends or from the even more tenuous tie that obtains where the motive to own stock is to sell "on the rise." In fact, this impersonalization of the modern corporation has its ill

results for most stockholders, as Professor W. Z. Ripley has amply demonstrated in Main Street and Wall Street. But perhaps it is not so well understood that the sense of social responsibility manifested by big business toward wage-earners is typically certain to be less than toward the ordinary stockholder. After all, the legal claims to ownership possessed by the stockholder are calculated to secure greater future consideration than any claim the wage-earner can advance—other than that of wages due for past labor.

In so far as wage-earners are concerned, all of this might be largely immaterial, provided they were fortunate enough to have the protection afforded by strong labor organizations. Strong unions, while they might not consider expedient a demand for higher wages on a generally failing market for commodities, would maintain a wage level somewhat higher than would otherwise exist. Wage-earners, through being able to save more, would thereby be better protected against the time when jobs become scarce. Unionism, as exemplified by such organizations as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Electrical Workers, would also successfully bring pressure upon owners for the inauguration of unemployment insurance. (This is not the place to argue the relative merits of government unemployment insurance versus unemployment insurance by industry; but as long as public opinion regards government unemployment insurance as a "socialistic" importation from Europe, it is clearly in order for the unions to persuade employing interests to bear a major part of the cost of unemployment.)

Unfortunately, in most of our large manufacturing industries, unionism is virtually non-existent. And here, once more, holding companies come into the picture. Holding companies and their super-bank connections play a dominant rôle in those industries where organized labor finds it most difficult to gain a foothold; for example, steel, automobiles, telephone and telegraph and power companies. The holding company as a form of business control is our latest version of the "trust," about which Bryan, Roosevelt and Wilson, reflecting the public opinion of their time, evinced so much concern.

Organized labor, as embodied in the American Federation of Labor, has never extended support to movements animated by a desire to "bust the trusts." The Federation's attitude in part has been the product of a well-founded fear that anti-trust laws might be used against labor unions, and in part the attitude has been an outgrowth of economic considerations. Such considerations are derived, on the one hand, from knowledge that cut-throat competition on the part of small firms frequently makes union standards of hours and wages extremely difficult to maintain, and on the other, from knowledge that the large-scale industry—including the trust—can afford to pay high wages and to grant attractive conditions of employment.

In this the unions appear to be correct, and they are to be commended for understanding the implica-

tions involved in the rapid passing, in many types of industry, of the small firm as an economically desirable unit of production. But the unions have been slow in applying the lesson, which ought to be obvious, to their own situation—namely, the necessity of re-vamping their organizations along industrial lines.

Their failure in the steel strike of 1919 was in large part directly traceable to the lack of one union in place of the dozens of craft bodies, jealous of their jurisdictions and with their leaders out to sabotage one another's ambitions. Moreover, failure to follow up the union program, announced at Detroit in 1926, of organizing the workers in the automobile industry, is evidently explained by the absence of the proper organization machinery. Additional cases in point might be cited, but it is clear that substantial wage increases and other improvements can best be secured through strong organizations of labor, and that the organizations required can be achieved only when the unions set their own houses in order. Even with proper organization and with leadership of high quality, in all

likelihood the task of bringing trustified industries into line will be a Herculean one.

For a while Mr. Ford may continue to startle the country with his seeming unorthodoxies in matters economic. He can do so because in some respects he is a benevolent despot. Holding companies, in essence, are no less despotic; but such companies, for the very reason of their superficially democratic arrangement of widespread stock ownership and their subordinate operating companies—with the resultant greater impersonalization—are not accustomed to temper appreciably their despotism with benevolence. An out-and-out condemnation of holding companies is not intended. Such companies, like Henry Ford, are doubtless institutions with purposes to serve. But just as holding companies, according to the Interstate Commerce Commission, need to be subjected to government control, so do they—and the Ford Company—need the control in regard to wages, hours and unemployment which organized labor can effectively supply. Intelligent co-operation is the greatest need of industry.

THE STREETS OF THE CITY

By C. C. MARTINDALE

THE Hebrew prophet, describing Messianic Sion, said that the streets of the city would be full of boys and girls playing there. We might retort that it was a very bad place for them to be playing. But anyhow, there were plenty of boys and girls. A lady recently wrote to me that a very poor woman had said to her: "I wouldn't mind having another baby, Miss, if only the chimney wouldn't smoke." My correspondent added that this would probably not be intelligible to the male mind. (She thought I would not realize the disheartenment of seeing your newly cleaned room spoiled by a sudden puff of soot, especially just when you were feeling ill, or could not stoop to flick away the smudge just come to roost on the corner rug.)

Well, to mine, though male, I think it was. For, long ago, I used to go to see some old men in so-called almshouses. All the chimneys smoked. One smoked so badly that the old man in that room had either to keep his door open, to let the smoke out (he had bronchitis) or, to keep it shut and himself be rather warmer, but be suffocated. In the long run, I advised him to keep it open, and I made him some coverlets padded with newspapers (for once the daily papers turned out to be useful—paper is very warm stuff) with which he covered himself up to the chin. He became quite happy. (Possibly some one might say: "Look what a retrograde thing it is to have coal fires!" Well, perhaps. Personally, I detest my gas fire, and I loathe hot-water pipes. A coal fire talks; it flickers; it is exquisite to look at; it varies. In every way I prefer a coal fire to central heating. Very good.

Having thus revealed my reactionary preferences, I get along to my only real point.)

England is probably behind the United States in a number of things that make for the material well-being of her citizens. I have no first-hand experience of the citizens of the United States such as to enable me to form even a tentative opinion as to whether they are happier than ours or not. Happiness, we shall all agree, does not depend on central heating. (I have just been told that I have no idea of how to obtain publicity, or how to win the sympathy of editors, reporters, or readers. I know I have not. The one and only virtue that I would really like to have, and to exhibit in anything I write, is perfect sincerity devoid of any squint. Hence, if by saying that I prefer coal fires to central heating, I antagonize the readers of *The Commonweal*, I am very sorry, but I cannot help it! I prefer coal fires.)

Now I am very interested in a part of London called Poplar. It has the Thames for boundary on the south; the Blackwall tunnel where they commit murders on the east; and invisible frontiers to the north and west, and a population of 60,000. Of these, 6,000 are Catholics; and one in ten of the entire population is out of work. There is nothing like one room per person in the district. Well over a thousand houses were flooded out the last time the Thames chose to rise too high. A woman, asked how she was, answered (the other day) that she was none too well, but then, at her age, you could not expect to have good health, could you? She was thirty-six. At thirty-six, to have given up all hope of life! Labor is either forcedly, or by

choice, casual; and it is so, from fourteen upward, for at fourteen you leave school. When you leave school, you are sent by your parents (delighted that their child need no longer waste time over learning things) to pick up some small job, and some half-dollar, as best you may. You continue doing this till you are sixteen, then you become expensive, having to be insured, and so you are sacked. You then experience that casual labor is more remunerative than a regular job, so to casual labor you stick, unless you become a fireman, a stoker, a greaser or a bargee. The one thing you do not become is a citizen with whom the modern state may be satisfied.

Anyone can see that this involves a deal of lounging. I have been told by ships' officers that when they touch at Australian ports, they find the Australian stevedore a magnificent worker, while, that is, he works. He, though he does a deal of lounging, manages (it appears) to keep his muscles in beautiful condition. The Englishman does not seem to me to be able to do so. If he once degenerates, which he does by lounging, he does not seem able to pick up. I heard that this was true even of the Scot—at least, so I was told in Edinburgh last time I was there; and I was told the same thing in Cardiff, especially about middle-aged men, whom interlocked strikes had kept out of work so long, that they had gone flabby, and could no more, as I said, "pick up." The miner or docker could not do even that amount of work which he had expected from himself.

Now whether you have work or whether you have not, you very much need a home. If you have, you ought to be able to go home, clean up and rest. If you have not, you must either lounge in the streets, or even tramp the streets looking for employment, but in any case you ought to have a home inside of which you can manage to employ yourself somehow. The entire population of Poplar having, for example, under .3 rooms per person, was at the end of last year 5,018. I could easily enlarge on conditions in other parts of London, or in other cities of England—in Southwark, for instance, south of the Thames (much of the south side, being rather lower than the north, is easily flooded out) more than forty thousand people were living last year in absolutely indefensible conditions of overcrowding. The medical officers insisted that more than ten thousand houses ought to be destroyed. What are you to do when you find a man, his wife and nine children living in one room? When there is no place for anything in a room like a cupboard or even a table, because there must after all be two beds for eight persons? Forgive my saying so, but how can you be surprised by habitual incest? I might add, that in such terrains, doctrines of contraception ought, you would suppose, to find their best breeding-ground. No doubt they are beginning to do so: but (and I thank God) the streets of the city are still pretty full of children playing there, though as you often hear, when seeking a domicile you might

as well bring a wild animal along with you, as a child, so strongly do landladies (or the tenant who is subletting a room to you) object to the noise that children make. Anyway, to have done with this subject, I am convinced that the danger our modern world has to foresee, is not so much contraceptiveism, as the wholesale practice of abortion. People who use contraceptives because they do not want to be worried with another, or any, child, are not going to put up with being worried by anything, if they can help it. They will take the risk, and if things go wrong, well, abortion, one hears, is becoming so much more safe and easy that that is the method to have recourse to! A correspondent from Düsseldorf tells me that (last year, I think) 800,000 abortions were registered in Germany: in one Australian city, I was told that a particular woman engineered nine a day. Obviously I cannot vouch for the truth of that: but it was no fool who told me. And when I reflect that I read, the other day, in some French magazine, an article by a careful French student who had been through (he insists) the poorest parts of London, that he had seen no sign of what he called real destitution, at least, nothing like what they mean by that in France, I hardly know what to say next. I insist that I am not arguing that Europe, or even England, or even London, are in a fatally bad way, or even comparatively so (I have no sufficient knowledge, for example, of the United States; and it would be bad manners for me in any case to make comparisons): still less am I arguing that people in such circumstances as I have described need be unhappy. Many (that is the miracle!) are radiantly happy. But I have been making a preface to a quite definite statement, and petition.

The statement is, that when "homes" are such as I have described, a mother must turn her children out when she wants to clean up; and if the husband comes home drunk, or if some one is ill, the more they are out the better. Tragic, that it is better for children to be outside their homes; but in such cases it obviously is. Hence children ought to have somewhere else to go and not merely the streets. And not children only: grown girls most certainly ought to; and so ought adolescents. And I expect we shall admit that Catholic children, Catholic boys and girls, young men and young women, ought to have somewhere Catholic to go. In Poplar, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus maintains a settlement. A couple of houses (complete with mortgage) a tiny garden, two club rooms. One or two heroic ladies live and work there permanently; others come regularly, or intermittently to help them. I go there when I can, because it makes me happy, and also (at times I feel!) in order to win forgiveness for living in the part of London where I do. I have an affection and veneration for the parish priest of Poplar, an Irishman who has worked himself to the last ounce for his people's sake: but there are two things he cannot do—one is, to know each of his flock with close intimacy; and the other, to spend

money on anything save what is of absolute and paramount necessity, like schools, not to insist on his having to pay off immense and crippling debts. Hence he finds, in the settlement, a very great ally. I long ago got to know of it through the late Duchess of Newcastle, a convert, who largely financed it so long as she lived. Her too I was fond of and respected for her deep spirituality; but it remained, as I often said, that at her death the settlement would be in a difficult way. It has, you must realize, to do the whole of the local welfare work, probation and jail work, hospital work and health work, employment work, and to look after classes, clinics, holidays, even athletics.

Now half its work is done in the two club rooms. When a year ago I observed that the roof leaked so much that all the pictures I had put on the naked Thames-mud brick walls were destroyed, and that the floor was broken into holes, so as to make boxing dangerous, and dancing impossible, and that both water supply and gas supply (not even electric light!) were hopelessly inadequate, I resolved to patch the place up. I saw that roof and walls must come down; but I hoped to strengthen at least the foundations. Now I discover that there are no foundations! My first thousand pounds will therefore be engulfed in excavations. Perhaps you will smile when I tell you that at best I envisage a building of no more than five rooms—an office, a canteen and casual room, and a large room for gym, boxing and rough games (remember that my lads are very rough, often: the sort I would never exclude, but in fact would long to welcome) on the ground floor; and a room for dancing and lectures, and one for library, classes and quiet games, on the upper floor—add, a flat roof where children may play games instead of in the streets, and where even older persons may on and off breathe a purer air in sweltering summers. I am now pulling down the larger room (the smaller one can still stand up for a while) and building so as to enable the walls to support, some day, that second story and that roof garden. In order to do even that, I have had to promise myself to collect £750 between Christmas and Easter, beyond what I possess. Hence, I write articles, as one method of helping myself in order that God may help me. I believe that the editor will give me a dollar or two for this one—that shall go to Poplar. (I once received a devastating shock—I realized that the editor of *The Commonweal* had given me, for an article that took me one night to write, exactly what many a French bishop can give to a country priest as his year's salary. I lectured, on the strength of that shock, for six months on the needs of the French clergy, and, thank God, not without effect.) But I am hoping very much that what I have written may persuade some readers of *The Commonweal* to supplement the anyway-expected dollar or two! In fact, I ask it very earnestly.

I said that providing a place other than the fraction of a room which constitutes home for so many

(and believe me, it will be very long before Poplar will be pulled down and rebuilt and rents made reasonable) was only one of my desires. Obtaining personal contact with even a few young Catholics—future fathers: future leaders in their world—is what I seek most and value most. I could write a bookful of anecdotes, were not most of them likely to be a giving-away of secrets. I wrote a letter to a young fireman, whom I had met in Poplar, succinctly known as Spud. It was the first letter he had ever received. No one in that stoke-hole received letters, least of all with typed addresses. There was almost a revolution. ("What do *you* mean by gettin' letters? What right have *you* got to be havin' letters? Hand it over!") He had to fight for his letter! But he kept it, took it round most of the world, brought it home (much tattered) and showed it round the club. Since it was a rather frivolous letter, and since I had illustrated it somewhat impertinently, I was not a little embarrassed. However, it seems to me that such friendships (for that one is a real and lasting friendship) make the bridge to new friendships with our Lord. Confessions have been heard among the soot-blackened privets of that garden which have put things right between Christ and souls long (seemingly) estranged. Hence it is not merely in my name, nor in Poplar's name, that I have written this naive article, but in Christ's, and what I ask you to help me to do, is to be done for Him. For the time being, however, I shall ask you to address me—in the editor's care.

Wide Waters

All day along my strait canal I go,
Moved by the lock of books to high or low;
Swirling within each new-petitioned cage
But always level after carriage.

Level my banks for little boys to leap
In glassy waters where the fishes sleep;
Strait for the farmer's bridge like faith to span
And make a tryst-rail for his new-found man.

Level for towline; level for old blind mule;
Level as sextant, transit, chain and rule;
Level as life and strait as only one
That keeps its destined channel, once begun.

My stream! My own "bright barque!" I choose to sail.
I tend the headlight, turn the ruddery tail.
My me! I love it—curious cabined box!—
Its freight, its passengers, its powerful locks,

Its tiny tasks, its evenings under stars,
Its banks that prick before like sunset bars
And offer ever-changing hues at hand.
I love to sit and watch. I couldn't land.

And yet—without a flood, without a break,
Without the definition of a lake,
Comes the wide waters, comes my fairy sea,
My day of troubled, safe infinity!

DOROTHY LEONARD.

THE FINGER PRINT

By WILLIAM A. MAGUIRE

THE Turkish town of Samsun, on the shores of the Black Sea, witnessed the tragedy of the Armenian exodus. The United States destroyer squadrons saw bits of it too. A great deal need not be told. It were better forgotten. Yet there was one impression which I do not wish to forget.

The mission of the destroyer to which I was attached was to assist in the American relief work among thousands of refugees whom the Turks had driven over the rugged hills of Anatolia and down to the more hospitable shores of the Black Sea. Two thousand arrived the day before we dropped anchor. It was hoped that they might be evacuated and safely shipped to Greece. Although the Armenians had occupied their lands for generations the Turks no longer wanted them. Those who were not so fortunate as to die on the mountain roads were driven like cattle to the little town of Samsun where there was food at least, shelter for some and a pasture for the others.

A young Princeton man named Paine was in charge of the refugee barracks. His was a difficult job but he labored prudently and with great patience. But he was not, as we shall see, a very clever detective. He took his job seriously and seemed anxious to show me the work he was required to do among the Samsun refugees.

I stepped ashore one morning and found Paine waiting for me on the jetty. As we walked down the narrow street I caught a glimpse of the hills which gave the town a crescent frame of faint purple that faded steadily to a rich green as the eye traced its descent to the dusty road and the mosque where the town begins. The thought came to me as it had often come before: nature at its loveliest and man at his worst. The open shops on the sidewalk; food exposed in a blazing sun to the feet of hungry flies; bedraggled Armenian women, half naked and mostly starved, darting nervously among ugly Turks snatching a morsel of food from the shelves and escaping like frightened rabbits.

We came to a church. It was no longer used as a place of worship. Refugees lived there; women and little children slept on the floor and the men found refuge in the cellar. Those who were ill were permitted by my friend to lie on the floor of the cool interior but the rest were made to do chores, unless their old age entitled them to bask in the morning sun. Over in a far corner of the building stood an old priest of the Orthodox Church. He had accompanied his flock on the long trek and won from Paine an appointment as overseer of the place. He had the air of an Old Testament patriarch, with his long beard, shaggy eyebrows and deep-set eyes. He wore a round biretta that looked like a satin candy box and his cassock was in tatters. There was tragedy in his look, but no sign of despair, as he approached and bowed. The interpreter, a Moslem named Mahmud, came up to us and conveyed in broken English the priest's report of the morning.

"No, there is no news of the stolen money. But the woman suspect will be at Mr. Paine's office at ten o'clock," said Mahmud. Paine explained to me that some one had robbed an Armenian woman of the equivalent of \$70.00 with which she hoped to buy a passage to Piraeus. The suspect was a woman who had slept alongside the victim the night the money disappeared. "Let's go," said Paine, "I've got an idea."

Paine escorted me through several compounds where Armenians lived in close congestion. We sampled soup from steaming pots in the yard. We inspected the rooms and watched the expressions on the faces of the younger men when Mahmud

would translate the admonitions of Paine if conditions appeared less sanitary than was safe. Paine performed many of the functions of a shepherd. If your imagination permitted you to overlook the quality of the tweed of his knickers and to fancy a crook in his hand instead of a malacca cane, he looked like one. Each house we visited had a priest in charge—shepherds in a very special sense. Mahmud the Turk was indispensable. Many questions would be asked regarding the sailings to Constantinople. Quarrels had to be settled, for where there are large groups of people tottering on the verge of despair, one is apt to find it difficult to keep them amenable to any sort of discipline. The Turkish officials were none too generous in their coöperation with the relief worker. Yet things ran more smoothly when an American destroyer appeared in the harbor. This presence of sea power could not, however, alleviate the misery of those who were herded in family groups in the open fields adjoining the shack where Paine had his office.

We hurried down a narrow street because it was nearly ten o'clock, arrived at a frame building and climbed the wooden stairs to the second floor. From one of the windows of the office I saw a veiled Turkish woman hanging clothes on a line. The other window, behind Paine's desk, gave out on a field where the Armenians squatted in family circles. There was no room for them in town. There were priests among them too. I stood watching one as he strolled in his ragged cassock from one group to the other, patting the children and listening to the woful tales of the old people. I was interrupted by a knocking on the office door.

"Ah, here's the culprit, Padre," said Paine. "Listen in on this." The door opened. Two Turkish soldiers dragged a woman into the room and placed her before Paine's desk. Mahmud followed them in. The woman was dressed in a gunny sack; her feet were bare and her matted hair fell in uneven strands over her unwashed shoulders. She was terror-stricken.

"Mahmud." Paine's voice was loud and his words were sharp. "Tell this woman that unless the money is returned within three days, I'll give no more food to the refugees. She knows who took it. Tell her that."

Mahmud delivered the ultimatum. The Turks carried the screeching woman through the doorway. I could hear her protesting all the way down the stairs.

"Do you think that'll work?" I asked Paine. "Anyone capable of stealing \$70.00 from an Armenian, let alone a refugee, should be able to scavenge enough food to keep alive."

"You'll see," was Paine's answer; he was obviously worried.

A few days later Paine came off to the ship for lunch. While we were still at the wardroom table I inquired about his detective work, and learned that his plan had failed. The three days of grace had passed and Paine found himself confronted with the embarrassment of having to make good his threat. He was a kind-hearted fellow, and the idea of stopping the rations of the refugees was decidedly repugnant to him. For advice he went to the priest whom he employed at the church. The old man said, "I think I can get the money. Give me two sticks of wood and a bucket of paint. Have my people assemble here in the church. We will soon find out who stole the money."

Paine described what took place in the building. Men, women and children crowded into the church; the priest directed them to approach the altar in the centre aisle and then leave by the side aisles. At the sanctuary rail the priest stood, holding aloft a crude cross that he had fashioned of the sticks;

on the rail he balanced a pail of fresh paint. The refugees slunk down the aisle, one by one; each dipped a finger into the paint and then solemnly made an imprint on the cross. Before half of them had made the sign, a young man came up. He shook like one with a chill. He stood still when he got within reach of the paint, trembled and then stepped forward and whispered something into the old priest's ear. The latter laid the cross down, ordered the people to leave the church, and with the culprit he disappeared through the sacristy door. He was back in a few minutes with the money in his hand. Clever though crude.

Paine flicked the ashes from his cigarette and looked across the table at me.

"Well, Padre, what sort of a superstitious hold did that priest have on his ignorant flock?"

"I could explain it, Paine," I replied, "but I'd much rather have you get it from the lips of the old man himself." Paine's cynical attitude rankled. "Let's go ashore and we'll ask the good man to tell you what it's all about."

They called away a motor dory for us and we were soon put-putting toward the jetty. Through the malodorous street we walked, cut through an alley to the church and found the priest there. Mahmud was summoned to interpret for us. It delighted me the way this fat Moslem acquitted himself. It must have been his liking for the priest rather than the story that inspired his eloquence.

The priest justified his unusual procedure in this wise. It was not he himself who exercised this power over the thief; it was the cross. The cross symbolized the only thing of real and lasting value left to him. Face to face with this reality, the value of the stolen money vanished. The young man, as he walked down the aisle, found himself arrived at a moment in his life when he must choose between material comfort and sacrilege. The priest knew that the man had made such a decision a few weeks before when he quit his farm rather than accept Mohammed. The physical act of touching the cross was quite too much. Also the priest knew how his half-starved flock valued "a pure heart, a good conscience and an unfeigned faith" in Jesus Christ. Thus spoke the old patriarch and Paine, though a little nonplused, was also impressed. But I think he was more than glad to know that the rations were no longer under a judicial ban.

Miranda's Island

Here are the dolphin furrows and here the shore
Of voices blurs the wind with a foam of words,
But she is not listening to them any more:
Nor is there a reason left for the crying birds

To whirl in their lovely protest like gusts of snow
With no wind blowing, like tumbling crests in air
Of waves dilated, for who will be watching now?
That wonder within her eyes persists, but where?

Here is an island in the remoter sea,
Remembering this long time the way her hands
Expected answers: and how she used to be
Sure that a ship would come. The very sands

Remember her light footfall: and no change
Persuades the place her beauty can be gone
Even to its moon-seen shadow! Islands are strange
Mirrors forever of all they have looked upon.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING.

GUADALUPE

By DOROTHY DAY

"TODAY," I announced to four-year-old Teresa, "we will go out to see Our Lady of Guadalupe."

"A pil'mage?" Teresa asked hopefully. Pilgrimages to her whether in New York, California or Mexico, mean very delightful bus rides, and in general a spirit of festivity. "I will bring Mary flowers." She always speaks of our Blessed Mother in a most familiar way. And forthwith, she began to strip heliotrope blooms from the plant which blooms in my French doorway, looking out over the roofs of Mexico City.

I put a stop to this depredation, telling her that we would buy flowers from a little boy in the market, but she stubbornly clung to a few, too short-stemmed blossoms.

Teresa is at a very precious age, the age when the apocryphal stories tell us that Saint Ann introduced the Blessed Virgin to the temple. The little girl Mary danced up the steps, the story says, and I remember it often when Teresa is inclined to be full of antics in church.

Busses are always crowded, but more exciting than street cars. We got in at the Zocalo, in front of the cathedral, and within a few blocks, two sheep got in too, or rather were pushed in, for their feet were tied together, and they lay on the floor of the bus at our feet, surveying us patiently. In front of the driver's seat hung a picture of Saint Christopher, and beneath the picture a little vase suspended for flowers. We were reassured by the presence of the Saint, for the bus careened madly around corners, past other busses, narrowly escaping pedestrians, urged on by the shouts of the conductor at every corner, "Vamonos," and by a vigorous slap of his hand on the tin sides of the camion.

The conductor is a gentleman beneath his rags. He gets out of the bus to help old ladies on. He lifts off the babies and children. He holds the market baskets for the women going home from their shopping. At one time, he had three gayly bedecked baskets, full of flowers, tomatoes, squash, one with a rabbit and still another with a live chicken, and in spite of his armful, he managed to collect the fares and help people on and off.

Teresa's enthusiasm was infectious. She squealed loudly at the spectacle of the lambs, the chicken and the rabbit. She wanted to know why there wasn't a pig.

"I'll sing a little song—all about a little pig riding on a burro, and all the little pigs have dirty faces—and that is Mexico."

No one could understand her song but the passengers laughed with her and the man next to us said, "Muy contento," and asked us where we were going.

Though the busses race along at a delirious speed, they are not impolitely hasty. If the driver sees anyone a block away indicating by gestures that he would like to come aboard, he stops to wait, and takes out a little top, which spins in the air, a "jo-jo" it is called, and which all the men and children are playing with at this time in Mexico City. But not the women. They have no time to play. They go to market and to mass. They are always washing clothes. When they have nothing else to do, they are fanning the charcoal fires in order that the men and the children may eat.

Guadalupe is only a few miles from the centre of the city, not as far as the Bronx is from lower Broadway. It takes only twenty minutes to get there. Though Christmas and Epiphany are passed, it is always a holiday at this shrine of the patroness of Mexico. December 12 is Guadalupe Day but

the pilgrimages are not confined to the holiday season. Throughout the year tens of thousands of devout natives with their padres, come from distant cities in special trains to worship at their Virgin's shrine. As our Lady of Lourdes revealed herself to the poor peasant girl, so did our Lady again reveal herself to the poor peasant Juan Diego, filling his tilma with roses that he might convince the bishop—it was so long ago that it was the first bishop of Mexico—that his story of her appearance was indeed true. When he dropped the roses out at the feet of the bishop, his tilma was imprinted with a glorious picture of the Virgin, which is just as bright and glowing to this day as all the bright prints and reproductions which hang in every home, in every shop and market and place of business.

In front of the cathedral where the picture is enshrined are many booths where rosaries, candles and pictures are sold. On one side is a huge covered market which spills out into the streets for blocks around. On the other side there is a park where a ferris wheel and merry-go-round accompany with their clamorous music the prayers of the faithful in the church. And in the back, there is the hill of Tepeyac where the Aztecs lived before the Spanish conquest. Now the hill is surmounted by a cemetery and on the top is a lovely little chapel which looks out over the entire city of Mexico, surrounded by the mountains, of which the greatest are the Mujer Blanca and Popocatepetl, crowned with dazzling snow. Nestling close to this small church are many little adobe houses, built on the side of the hill.

After Teresa had blessed herself with holy water, and made her rather lopsided genuflection, she skipped out of the church again that she might lean over the low walls and peer into doorways at the chickens, pigs, lambs and pigeons, not to speak of cats and dogs which shared the houses and gardens.

"These are all Mary's babies," she said. "The little pigs and the chickens and the boys and the girls. And these are all little baby houses, and that," pointing to the church, "is the mama house."

It had been a hard climb up the slippery cobbled steps of the little hill, and we were glad to sit there for a while on one of the terraces looking down on the pueblo of Guadalupe. On a pilgrimage the devout Mexicans will climb that hill on their knees, but on ordinary days like this they content themselves with a lesser penance. When they enter the cathedral at the foot of the hill, they advance on their knees all the length of the church to the altar, holding aloft a lighted candle in their hands. Many mothers have bundles on their backs as well as babies in their arms as they humbly pay their respects to the Mother of God.

When we descended the steps on the other side of the hill, there was still the holy spring to visit which is sheltered by a chapel domed with glazed tile. The spring boils up in the bottom of the walled-in well, and Teresa leaned over it fascinated. Attendants brought up water in copper buckets and poured out jugs full for the Mexicans and Indians who surround it at all times of the day, in order that they may drink.

"And oh, the tiniest baby church!" Teresa shouted, looking across the street where the littlest and humblest of chapels has been erected in honor of Juan Diego. There is room for only eight or ten people in it and it is the width of its doors which always stand open. Teresa had to say one of her tiny prayers here, "about you and me," she explained, and then she was ready for the bus again.

"And now, no more churches today," she sighed, surfeited as even the great saint for whom she was named confessed her weak flesh at times to be—"but a lollipop and peanuts instead."

COMMUNICATIONS

AMERICA AND THE AGED

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—In *The Commonwealth* for January 29 appeared a criticism by me of an earlier article therein by Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes, entitled *America and the Aged*, followed by a reply from Professor Hayes. I would let the discussion end there were it not that in his reply Professor Hayes challenges me on two points.

Criticizing as exaggerated his statement, in the article cited, that 650,000 people abroad are covered by state systems of old-age protection, I said, *inter alia*, that in many countries "the state systems of protection have broken down, are not yet in effect, are not yet developed," etc. Professor Hayes challenges me to name the countries in which "the state systems of protection have broken down." In reply I can name France and Argentina, in which countries respectively the Workers' and Peasants' Old Age Pension Law of 1910 and the Compulsory Insurance Law of January 28, 1924, have literally "broken down." And I renew my criticism that the old-age protection under foreign state systems does not effectively cover even one-third of the number of people stated by Professor Hayes.

Then he invites me to specify "precisely" what is the "reformation of our existing methods of relief for the needy" that I advocate. That is hardly fair while he limits himself to a declaration in favor of "any reasonable and up-to-date state-guaranteed security for old age," regardless of details. Nevertheless I will specify "precisely" that I am opposed to pending proposals for state guarantee, from public funds, of a substantial income to every citizen (with minor exceptions) who is over either sixty-five or seventy years of age, for the reasons that such a guarantee would be demoralizing, pauperizing, wasteful of the public funds and not an "up-to-date" but, on the contrary, a distinctly discredited method of dealing with the problem of old-age poverty. The up-to-date method abroad of safeguarding against destitution in old age is through compulsory insurance covering sickness, invalidity, old age and survivors, with unemployment also now coming to be covered. As an alternative to this truly up-to-date method, I advocate as preferable for America: (1) That the people, through voluntary thrift and insurance, strive to prevent (instead of propagating) dependence upon the state in old age. (2) Since old-age poverty is largely due to sickness and infirmities in middle life, that the community multiply its provisions for after care and rehabilitation. (3) Since a large proportion of the aged poor need institutional care, appropriate institutional care should be provided, preferably in religious or private philanthropic institutions, but, so far as necessary, by the state. This means that county farms and almshouses should be replaced by better institutions but not by pension. (4) That all persons, regardless of age, who are unable to maintain themselves but who do not need institutional care or control, should be otherwise assisted by the state. The principles for such assistance are well stated in section 77 of the Public Welfare Law, of New York, which took effect January 1, as follows:

"It shall be the duty of public welfare officials, in so far as funds are available for that purpose, to provide adequately for those unable to maintain themselves. They shall whenever possible administer such care and treatment as shall restore such persons to a condition of self-support and shall further give such service to those liable to become destitute as may prevent

the necessity of their becoming public charges." I favor the provision of adequate funds and appropriate administrative machinery to carry the foregoing principles into effect.

I may add, paraphrasing Professor Hayes, that "I am tired of" insinuations that those who profess opinions such as the above, adverse to old-age pensions, are adherents of the Elizabethan poor laws and contemners of the teachings of Leo XIII.

P. TECUMSEH SHERMAN.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—I did not state that 650,000,000 people abroad are "effectively" protected in old age. "Effectively" is a too-debatable word. I do maintain that foreign countries, whose populations total at least 650,000,000, have undertaken to afford some measure of old-age security by means of state insurance or pensions. I asked Mr. Sherman to name countries in which "the state systems of protection have broken down." He names France and Argentina. I don't know about Argentina—its 8,000,000 inhabitants would hardly affect my statistics. But about France, with its 40,000,000, I do know; and Mr. Sherman is mistaken. The Old-Age Pension Law of 1910 has "broken down" only in the sense that it has been superseded by the far more general and drastic National Insurance Law of 1928, to the practicable enforcement of which the present conservative French government of MM. Tardieu and Loucheur are fully committed.

I am glad that Mr. Sherman has been induced to adumbrate a counter-plan of his own. I cannot see, however, that it represents any great advance over the present utterly inadequate methods of caring for the aged poor in America. At best, his plan seems to me to be dreadfully complex, difficult of attainment, overwhelmingly expensive, and, in so far as it favors the perfecting of institutions, dangerous to the home. He only confirms me in my conviction of the necessity of a system of old-age state insurance or pensions.

CARLTON J. H. HAYES.

THE NEW CATHOLIC BIBLE

London, England.

TO the Editor:—A letter in *The Commonweal* of January 22 condemns, at least by implication, an enterprise in which I am interested—the Westminster Version of the New Testament from original Greek texts. Your contributor says bluntly—"such a translation is worthless." Perhaps if he had seen the account of the Westminster Version which you were good enough to publish in your issues for January 1 and 8 he would have realized that a project which aims at promoting the devotional reading of the Scriptures by Catholics and which for that reason presents a clear and accurate translation in an attractive form, should not be condemned because it does not, at the same time, cater to the advanced student, with all the apparatus of critical learning. Notwithstanding the number of Greek texts extant, the substantial meaning of the various parts of Scripture is beyond dispute and can be more easily reached through the medium used by the sacred writers. I submit that, in view of the purpose for which it is intended, the Westminster Version is not obnoxious to your learned correspondent's criticism.

REV. JOSEPH KEATING,

Joint Editor of the Westminster Version.

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THE PLAY AND SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Joseph

APPARENTLY the John Erskine fashion of modernizing ancient history will persist for years to come. This time one Bertram Bloch has taken the biblical story of Joseph in Egypt and turned it into a satirical comedy of racial traits. It is well to say at the outset that the general tone and temper of the play are less iconoclastic than one would expect. It is true that the motivations of the story are slyly twisted to the modern mood, that fear of being fed to the crocodiles has quite as much to do with Joseph's resistance to Potiphar's wife as any God-fearing impulse, and that a naturalistic turn is given to all the main events. But with this, Mr. Bloch has managed to retain a certain underlying sincerity which keeps the comedy from turning completely to farce. His Joseph is a modern trader and salesman in every sense of the word, practical and politic, unctuous and persuasive, but never without a note of pathos and of persistent homesickness for the land of Canaan and for his family. Nor, when he appeals to his God, is there the slightest hint of irony or insincerity.

For the rest, the comedy follows the obvious lines. Joseph "sells himself" to Potiphar, and, as his overseer, at once begins to dig ditches, just as a precaution, in case the gods of the Nile should forget to have the river overflow and irrigate the land! He is strict but humane. Potiphar is, of course, the main comedy character, ably played by Ferdinand Gottschalk. Neris, his wife, is the trouble-maker who ends Joseph's peaceful existence and has him thrown into prison. In this crisis, Joseph again exercises his powers of salesmanship. Just before he is to be put to death, he persuades the prison superintendent that the prison can be run on a profit-making basis—by irrigating the prison lands and selling the crops, by taxing the richer prisoners for their wine and luxuries, and by many similar little innovations. The superintendent sees riches for himself in these ideas, and Joseph is saved and made prison manager. At last comes the fatal day when all Egypt is upset by Pharaoh's dream of the seven lean and the seven fat kine. Joseph, who had used inside information in pretending to interpret the dream of the king's butler, and thus acquired a reputation, is sent for. Pharaoh is angry at finding him still alive, but promises to spare him if he can interpret the famous dream. At first nonplused, Joseph finally seizes this as his chance for master-salesmanship. He recalls the seven-year cycles of famine and plenty, falls back on his ditch-digging formula, shows Pharaoh how, by irrigation and by storing the surplus grain of the years of plenty, he can create a valuable monopoly in times of famine. He hurdles the last obstacle by winning over the high priest and his cohorts with the suggestion that the grain can be sold from the temples and thus bring a priestly revenue. For these adroit suggestions, Joseph is placed in command of the economic organization of Egypt. When Potiphar is disconsolate at losing forever so valuable an overseer for his personal estates, Joseph recommends his brother Benjamin for the job! Thus all ends happily.

Obviously, there is a certain cheapness to this Erskine formula, and also a real danger. It goes rather farther than the humanizing of historical idols in the current mode of biography. Modern biographers are at least in search of relative truth, whereas the Erskine formula has only one object in view—modern satire under the mask of ancient names. It has as little relation to actual historical figures as Gilbert's libretto of *The Mikado* to the realities of Japan. The danger lies in

the readiness of any audience to grant a certain reality to the satirical mask. The Japanese have been known to object to performances of *The Mikado* for no other reason than this human weakness of audiences. In the present instance, Mr. Bloch's play undoubtedly tends to cheapen and make rather ridiculous one of the finest legends of the Jewish race. He has only partly surmounted this danger by the underlying touch of sincerity I have noted.

The chief redeeming note, however, is sounded by George Jessel in his playing of Joseph. He sustains an almost perfect balance between the comic and the pathetic. His Joseph emerges as a definitely attractive figure, proud of his race, simple and humble before his God. Yet the commercial instinct of the modern trader and salesman is played to the hilt of its satire. (At the Liberty Theatre.)

It's a Grand Life

JUST why Mrs. Fiske should select this play as her second repertory vehicle of the season, and just why Hatcher Hughes should be one of its authors are mysteries for the mind-readers to solve. Mr. Hughes is a former Pulitzer Prize winner, and also a teacher of dramatics in one of our largest universities. Both facts would seem to disqualify him from writing the unconvincing rubbish which fills most of the present play. On the other hand, as the name of a second author, Alan Williams, is added to the program, it is possible that most of the worst features of the play can very likely be attributed to the rewriting process which is just now the principal bane of Broadway.

As to Mrs. Fiske's share in the proceedings, one can explain it on the theory that she was captivated by the sad and charitable wisdom of the part she plays. The character of Mrs. Tyler, as a mother who has to face and help solve every conceivable sex and marriage problem of a preposterous family, holds a certain charm. But certainly this one character does not compensate for the parade of vice, free love, illegitimacy, obstetrics and what-not which somewhat overcrowds the action of one evening.

It is a rather common superstition on the part of Broadway producers that, if a play "points a moral," it makes no difference what material is used. The converse superstition is also held—that the moral of a play makes very little difference provided all situations are handled with "good taste." Both viewpoints are absurdly wrong, but they persist vigorously in an age that has thrown standards and clear thinking to the wind.

In the play under review here the endless patience, the guiding wit and charm, and the ultimate wisdom of Mrs. Tyler combine to form a brief sermon on "how to handle your husband, son, daughter and all the people with whom they become entangled." But the essential crudity with which these problems are stated, the unbelievable accumulation within twelve hours of distasteful situations and the dramatic ineptitude with which they are strung together make the play quite worthless and generally offensive.

Of Mrs. Fiske's own work, which always manages to be important no matter what her vehicle, it seems to me that, in the reserve and poise of Mrs. Tyler, she has struck a personal note of rare charm and distinction, a much quieter note than usual and therefore disappointing to those who like to see Fiske fireworks, but essentially strong and persuasive. This makes it doubly uncongenial to have to report the messy and tasteless character of the play on which she lavishes so much personal distinction. (At the Cort Theatre.)

Out of a Blue Sky

SINCE the thunderbolt is conspicuously absent in this German play adapted by Leslie Howard, a more appropriate title would be *Out of Thin Air*—with all the emphasis on the very thin air. The initial idea is good, but its working out, in spite of many attempts at subtle satire, is so slow and cumbersome and unpersuasive that even the capital clowning of Reginald Owen cannot save it from boredom. Moreover, its main theme, which is the triangle of adultery (why should one be expected to use pretty names to describe such situations?) is such a trite and outworn formula of the continental comedy stage, that its refurbishing is an insult to audience intelligence.

The initial idea has amusing possibilities. When you enter the theatre you are supposed to expect a performance of *Camille* at a German municipal theatre with a Russian director in charge. Through a mistake on the theatrical call-board, neither actors nor stage hands are ready for the performance. The curtain goes up on a stage stripped of scenery. There follows a frantic exchange of abuse between the Russian director and the theatre management. At last a young play-reader—supposed to represent the modern school in the theatre—suggests that a play be improvised, using members of the audience as the cast, and allowing them to play their natural selves. This, he believes, would result in a drama quite as satisfactory as any artificial situations created by a playwright. Various members of the audience volunteer for parts, the substance of a play is improvised and all might be well were it not for the unforeseen fact that a real as well as an imaginary situation exists between some of those who have volunteered to act. In other words, a supposedly real triangle exists beneath the improvised triangle of the plot. The core of the evening is supposed to rest on this plot within a plot, and everything depends on the extent of your willing credulity.

The fact that the director resorts to the old triangle for his improvised play is meant to satirize the imaginative impotence of theatrical directors in general. But to double the triangle is hardly a way of showing the superior intelligence of the playwright himself. To be effective, the satirist must show himself superior to those he satirizes—and this Hans Chlumberg, the German author, obviously fails to do. Then, satire must also have animation and quick point. The scenes during which the director selects his cast from the audience and discusses drama in general are interminable. The only refreshing moments are when Reginald Owen as the volunteer (and real) husband is on the stage. His comedy sense is unerring, even though his acting is burdened with mannerisms. He is very near that fatal thing, a whole show in himself—fatal because it covers up the worst defects in a playwright's script, and makes one tolerate perfectly worthless trash. (At the Booth Theatre.)

Grandeur Films

IN HAPPY DAYS, William Fox presents the first complete picture on the new enlarged film, which he has christened *Grandeur*. It differs from the conventional film in being approximately twice as wide for a given height. In other words, the *Grandeur* screen has about the same proportions as the ordinary stage, permitting the filming of large groups and full-width stage effects with an entirely new perspective. *Happy Days* is an all-star stunt, and merely hints at future possibilities. But *Grandeur* developments will undoubtedly bring new and important technique into talking pictures, and add still more to the scope of the director during the development of this infant art. (At the Roxy Theatre.)

BOOKS

Beguiling Simplicity

The Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge. New York: The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. \$3.00.

PERHAPS no autobiographer may tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. For he must continue among his contemporaries and the tale of his relations with others finds a difficult balance between embarrassing frankness and tactful reticence. Mr. Coolidge escapes both these difficulties by an undocumented statement so closely confined to the immediate circumstances of his origin and development that, beyond his own family and his college instructors, he refers, and but casually, to very few of the great number of individuals with whom he must have had social and political contact.

He exhibits his characteristic conciseness. He condenses the whole statement of his life within less than two hundred and fifty pages; his national political career, including the Presidency, within fifty. He thus avoids the original sin of most modern autobiography and biography—bulk—and indicates why his alma mater conferred its Doctor's degree upon its most distinguished son for, among other reasons, "adequate brevity."

Prepared for modern magazine publication, we possess already the critical evidence that its "lack of self-revelation" is not only resented but irritates some who believe they could write much better and more satisfactorily of Mr. Coolidge than he writes of himself. The book will not be numbered among the great biographies of history, but it presents a remarkably interesting and suggestive picture of a unique political figure. To the thoughtful analyst it supplies all the wellsprings of the autobiographer's salient characteristics. Yet its very simplicity appears to confound the Freudian critic, seeking complicated motives for an uncomplicated mind and character.

Reticent by nature, he is frank about the personal and educational influences that played upon his boyhood and youth. To expect intimate self-interrogation and continuous analysis of emotions, motives and mental struggles, is to expect something entirely foreign to his nature. Mr. Coolidge's mental processes are simple and direct. The complications sought and desired by his critics do not exist. On the other hand, he clearly perceived the causal forces of his own growth and development. Far from being cold and unemotional, the fine reverence and affection for his father presents a continuing relationship too infrequently found in the modern family. His friendships are deep and lasting. He does not say so, but the testimony of his associates, even of the humblest among the village intimates of his boyhood, counteract the common notion of his lack of warmth in personal relations.

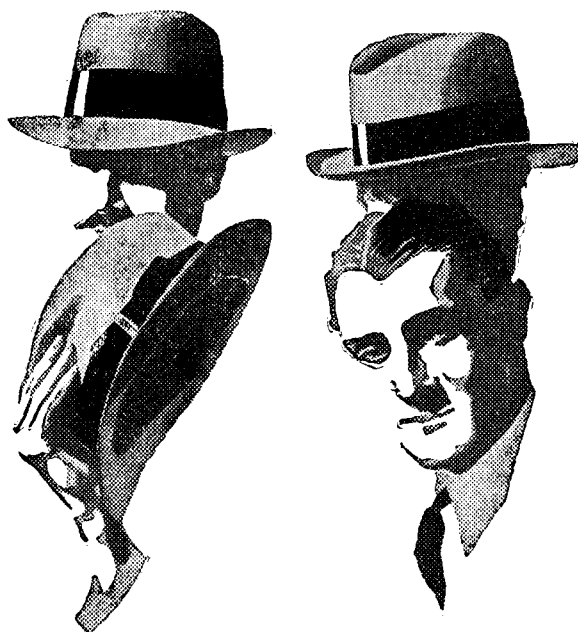
The book is full of the evidences of his orderliness of mind, his acute interest in that study of such lasting importance to the public man—human nature. Politics is the art of moving large numbers of people in a given direction, without the aid of physical force. Mr. Coolidge possesses it to an extraordinary degree. He knows the average man and he appeals to him because he met and overcame the difficulties that make up so much of an average man's struggle. He occupied the highest position in the gift of the people without loss of his simplicity. He returns from the pinnacle of political power to live in a small town and a small house, all of which makes the average man feel that he is very much akin to himself.

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UNEMPLOYMENT

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Professor, Moral Theology, The Catholic University
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Director, Social Action Department, National Catholic
Welfare Conference

The great interest shown in the four articles on unemployment by Dr. Ryan, which appeared in *The Commonwealth* during October, 1929, indicated the advisability of reprinting them in pamphlet form. The urgency of the problem with which they deal, as evidenced by the conferences of industrial, financial, and labor leaders called by President Hoover in Washington, is a further indication of the need for a closer study of Dr. Ryan's brilliant analysis of the report of the Senate Committee on Unemployment.

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upon the composition and procedure of the Senate, and upon the popular relations of the chief executive to the people, are at once interesting and informing. He holds strong political convictions and expresses them. He has no delusions of grandeur: "It is a great advantage to a President and a major source of safety to the country, for him to know that he is not a great man. . . . Any man who has been placed in the White House cannot feel that it is the result of his own exertions or his own merit. Some power outside and beyond him becomes manifest through him."

The most that Mr. Coolidge claims for himself is that he was continuously prepared for a higher step. When opportunity knocked, he was at the door. Mr. Coolidge sententiously remarks: "He was never hurt by what he did not say." But he was considerably embarrassed by a cryptic thing he did say: "I do not choose to run." Perhaps no chapter of his work is more revealing as to his methods of thought and expression than that in which he explains why he refused to enlarge that much-discussed statement. It is the part of the book which most invites reflection.

To a number of critics, perhaps the most disconcerting revelation of this "unrevealing" volume is the unwavering faith of Calvin Coolidge. He frankly confesses, at each stage of his upper journey, that he prayed for help and got it. He contemplated the workings of his great office and came "to realize, with an increasing sense of humility, that he is but an instrument in the hands of God." This is too much for one of our foremost American biographers, to whom "the attitude is simply that of the Christian, not to say fundamentalist, orthodoxy of the nineteenth century or earlier."

It is incredible to those of little faith that, in the midst of so much theological collapse, Mr. Coolidge retains so much. It does not occur to the sceptical or the indifferent that such an attitude is not only one of Mr. Coolidge's interesting revelations but one of the bonds that hold this quiet and firm New Englander in the abiding respect of so great a number of his fellow-citizens, whose faith is not yet the victim of the complexities that torture our self-confessed intellectuals.

JAMES A. EMERY.

Nymph in a Retreat

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, by Louise Schutz Boas. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. \$2.50.

FROM Elizabeth Barrett to Elizabeth Browning is more than a mere change of name. It is an inverted metamorphosis, where the nymph is chased out of, not into, an almost fabulous retreat. The implications of such a change and of the circumstances in which it would occur, are exciting enough. Born into an utterly horrid household, her own inclination to morbidness was increased by the early death of the only brother she cared for. Sick in body, but with her vast intellect and very feminine imagination unimpaired, she shut herself up in a perfect hothouse of a room. The polite world, gently perspiring in an Indian summer of romance, observed this stifling retreat with delighted reverence: it concealed England's greatest poetess. From it, England's greatest poetess continued to pour forth her delightful correspondence and a quantity of romantic verse, herself unseen save by a few particular friends who, oblivious to the atmosphere, would sit with her for hours "conversing brilliantly." Hence, after a lengthy and fascinating parley, Robert Browning dragged her into sunlight and strength. There was the elopement, the journey to Italy, the sudden return to health. Robert was permitted to read Sonnets

from the Portuguese. Luncheon changed from thrushes and chianti to mutton chops. The metamorphosis was complete.

Mrs. Boas flavors her account of these and subsequent events with occasional rapid and clever sketches, one in particular of the adorable Miss Mitford. Remote and infrequent echoes of Geoffrey Scott suggest an attempt at something more important than a mere account. And rightly. Elizabeth Barrett, her life and times—here is the material for a profound and illuminating ballet—melodrama, tragedy, comedy, wit, burlesque, compelled to unity by an entirely beautiful something we still obscure with the epithet Victorian. Who shall do the choreography? Who will leave Elizabeth Browning alone, and write a really good book all about Elizabeth Barrett?

It is possible to write a biography of a person without insisting upon the details of that person's work. The process, however, is an intensely difficult one—through painstaking critical and social research, one arrives at the exact domain of pure imagination and insight. To create an image like a smooth and imperfect crystal; to show the veins inside; to tell the lights that are reflected from outside; to appraise without elaboration the exact relation of the whole to its infinite variety of parts: such a process might be applied to Elizabeth Barrett. Mrs. Boas, however, is like one who unearths a rare bulb and says: "Here is the leaf mold—observe its color and peculiar smell. This is the bulb. I haven't time to cut it open. Above the bulb you may perceive a hyacinth; it has a romantic perfume, and quite a variety of important and eccentric bees have been attracted to it."

This is readable, but it is not biography and it is not adequate to Elizabeth Barrett. To Elizabeth Browning, yes, for of her there is practically nothing new to tell. The world may have to wait another 500 years for the possible arrival of another George Moore, before it has fresh news of the Browning marriage; but Mrs. Boas honorably does no violence to it.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD.

Nomads

The Dark Journey, by Julian Green; translated from the French by Vyvyan Holland. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.

OF THE original version of his story, known in France as *Léviathan* (reviewed in *The Commonweal*, August 21, 1929) Mr. Green declared the intention had been to "show the activity of passion, capable at once of good and of evil": surely one of the most challenging and awesome themes in literature. But there is little of constructive passion—even in the sense of happiness or activity or self-fulfilment—in its material. Everywhere is first delirium, then devastation. The chief protagonist, Guéret the tutor, finding that the object of his desire is not only the village laundress but also the village prostitute, goes more or less mad and disfigures the girl for life in a vicious attack—after which he wantonly murders a helpless old man on the street corner. The unfortunate girl herself, who is understandable although never very vivid or appealing, tries to save him from arrest; and failing, wanders the roads distraught until in the misty dawn she finds deliverance beneath a merciful cart-wheel. Of the three other women involved, one is a procuratrix whose curiosity is even greater than her cupidity, and the second (Guéret's wife) is a rather pathetic, rather fatuous drudge. The third, a rich married woman embittered by boredom, finds sinister pleasure in striking her child and finally—having first befriended, then betrayed the tutor—ends the tangle of her life in the manner

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of Hedda Gabler. As for the subsidiary males, they are but a sorry sort of sordid morons.

Undoubtedly the particular obsessions of these people are revealed with an objective realism and subjective analysis so intense as to be almost physically exhausting. They are but a step from insanity, and oftener than not the step is taken before the stricken eye of the reader's mind. It is quite true that Mr. Green's style, also his subject-matter, frequently recall the author of *Madame Bovary*. It is true indeed, that he does consummately well what he sets out to do. But is there any use denying the morbidity of the whole exploit—the fact that his people are so hideously warped and neurotic that their reactions are only remotely related to normal human experience? In fact, may there not be a very real use in pointing out quite simply that the gifted Julian Green's pictures of provincial French life are just about as universal as Eugene O'Neill's pictures of provincial America or D. H. Lawrence's of provincial England?

KATHERINE BRÉGY.

A Victorian Statesman

Lord Lansdowne, by Lord Newton. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$8.50.

THIS volume discloses Lord Lansdowne's position and mental attitude toward the question of peace, which found partial expression in his "peace letter" to the *London Daily Telegraph*, from which it appears that he had an interview with the *London Times* before approaching the *Telegraph* and had already, previous to that, approached high government officials on the subject. Letters from Lord Sanderson and Colonel House are enclosed which place the peace letter in a somewhat different angle, so that it can be seen that the press and the public were divided. But many agreed that the letter tended to focus opinion again on the objects and conditions of the war.

The volume indicates no comparison between politics and political life in 1860-1870 with 1910-1920. Indeed Lord Lansdowne and his biographer display but little interest in the philosophy or mental changes of succeeding periods.

The fact that English politics have passed from the control of the leisured and cultured classes to the types that demand position and then attention for personal reasons finds no mention in the volume.

This late Victorian statesman had the characteristics of his age, but in his own case slightly accentuated because his mother was of French descent, a fact which Lord Lansdowne betrayed strongly in his innate courtesy and ceremonious manners, both of which were incomprehensible to many modern politicians of the democratic school.

The reviewer once witnessed, in the British House of Lords, an incident which will serve to indicate the cutting severity of his manner. Lord Lansdowne was addressing the House of Lords upon Mr. Lloyd George's budget, when suddenly Lord Crewe passed between the speaker and his (opposition) audience. Instantly Lord Lansdowne ceased speaking but remained rigidly erect with a slight bending forward as if to indicate that he was anticipating a remark from Lord Crewe. The silence grew intense till Lord Crewe realized that his attempt to pass and talk with another peer had stopped the debate, so he retreated to his former seat. Then and then only did Lord Lansdowne recommence by saying, "As I was saying, my Lords, when the noble earl opposite sought distraction in exercise."

BOYD-CARPENTER.

HEBREWISMS OF WEST AFRICA

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by

JOSEPH J. WILLIAMS, S.J., Ph.D., Litt.D.

Formerly Managing Editor of AMERICA

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NEXT WEEK

President Hoover's appointment of an inquiry commission to Haiti has focused this country's interest on the affairs of that troubled island. It is particularly timely, then, that Michael Williams should discuss in PERSONS AND PLACES the experiences he had and conclusions he reached while with President Harding's Haitian commission. These latter include a proposal which aims to stabilize America's relations with foreign countries. . . . Don C. Seitz has termed his paper, THE CLOUD FROM CANADA, "a prophecy." It is that but it is also a study in cause and effect and the application of Canada's experience with prohibition to the problems of Volsteadism. . . . A shrewd analysis of the reasons which determined the abrupt opposition in the Senate to the appointment of Charles E. Hughes to the position of Chief Justice of the United States is furnished by William C. Murphy, jr., in WHAT PRICE FEDERAL-

ISM? Certain Senators, Mr. Murphy explains, became aware of "that present-day federalism which . . . distrustful of popular control of government, seeks to enfold property rights and privileges in a protecting mantle of law expounded by a court far removed from and impervious to popular sentiment." . . . The laboring class of 1670 was not bothered by questions of injunction but there were other means used to regulate its actions. William Collins, General Organizer of the American Federation of Labor, sets forth some of the details of THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF LABOR. . . . An unusual sketch, whose locale is the little-known continent of Australia, has been sent us by Henry S. Lamond. THE NIGHT HORSE will be particularly interesting to all those who love animals. . . . HAS AVIATION A FUTURE? by H. O. Peters, discusses the various factors which go to make commercial aviation a financial possibility.

Liturgical Music

At the Pius X School of Liturgical Music Dom Sablayrolle will continue the series of lectures on Sacred Art on February 28.

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Revivalistic Synthesis

The Lord of Life: A Fresh Approach to the Incarnation, by H. T. Andrews, Vernon Bartlett, F. C. Bryan, A. T. Cadoux, G. E. Darlaston, D. Miall Edwards, H. H. Farmer, John Lewis, Malcolm Spencer. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

THIS work is a well-compacted effort to find a Metaphysic for emotionalism in religion. It draws its arguments largely from the conclusions of the experimental psychologists. In sum, however, it is little more than early Methodist revivalism and present-day Holy Rollerism expressed in the form of a philosophic synthesis. It finds in religion no doctrinal content, though it sustains its argument by an elaborate and abstruse apparatus drawn from the recent developments in science and philosophy. Its basis is subjective: its method pragmatic. It differs from the older Protestantism in finding apparently no doctrinal values in the Bible.

One striking feature of the book is that though it represents a phase or development of German theological thought or speculation, it does not present that thought in its most recent manifestation. The authors discuss Ritschl and Ritschlianism, but they are silent about the neo-Ritschlians and the logic of both Ritschlianism and neo-Ritschlianism which led to the theories of Karl Barth. The thought of these English scholars was expressed more cogently a generation ago by German writers, and, in the interval German thought has been molded afresh under the impact of science and social change. Very seldom has any group of writers written of Christ with greater reverence or a deeper sense of dependence, but it seems a travesty of Christianity to present the life of Christ as merely a standard by which "religious experience" may be gauged. The doctrines of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, and Authority in Religion are traditionally and necessarily associated with belief in the Incarnation. Without them it is impossible to sustain belief in Christ as The Lord of Life.

PATRICK J. HEALY.

Sound Counsel

Temptations to Rightdoing, by Ella Lyman Cabot. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

THIS book is happily named. It is, itself, one long temptation to rightdoing, as we understand that term from Mrs. Cabot's introduction, in which she says, "The aim of this book is to bring together from actual experience the principal attractions to good living—in other words, the ideas, affections, interests and activities that make us prefer the right and reject the wrong. These magnets I call Temptations to Rightdoing in contrast to the better-known term, 'temptations to wrongdoing.'"

The anecdotes are beautifully chosen. The short chapter called Friends is possibly richest in such illustration. Standards, and Skilful Criticism, also are noteworthy. And the quotations from papers and essays written by children, and older girls, show how inspiring have been the class discussions in which most of them had their origin. From first to last these pages carry messages and counsels of which one would not have a word left out or changed. I am not going to purchase twenty—or more—copies for distribution in the many households where I know they would be of inestimable use. But I should like to. For it is a book "no family should be without."

MARGARET KENDALL.

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Briefer Mention

The Italian Comedy, by Pierre Louis Duchartre; translated by Randolph T. Weaver. New York: The John Day Company.

IT IS curious that this book was not translated sooner. Like Maurice Emmanuel's *Antique Greek Dance* it is one of those prime art history specialties which only the French can concoct. Duchartre's book is, of course, not so much a history of the *Commedia dell'Arte* as a running commentary on the actors, scenarios and costumes of a vanished stage. Everything from masks to ticket-sellers is somehow sandwiched in. The rich collection of texts and illustrations is a veritable marvel, which would be interesting for its own sake if one cared not so much as a straw for the improvisations which post-Renaissance Harlequins and Pantaloons showered upon their audiences. Not always a moral theatre (indeed it was sometimes even looser than the age it entertained) the *Commedia dell'Arte* had many a brush with civil and ecclesiastical authority. This is one link which connects it with the modern drama, although it may be termed primarily a section of the bridge back to Plautus and the Roman comedy. The translator, whose work is first rate, induced M. Duchartre to amend the text. He has likewise supplied full corroborative notes which the reader will find he may consult with profit.

The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Volume I, by James F. Kenney. New York: Columbia University Press. \$12.50.

THIS excellent and imposing volume, commented upon editorially in this issue, is an examination of ecclesiastical writings which throw light upon the early history of Ireland. The work is so well done that it must sooner or later come into the hands of everybody who is studying the period in question. One looks forward expectantly and with pleasure to the publication of the second volume.

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